APRIL, 1958

Ballet TODAY

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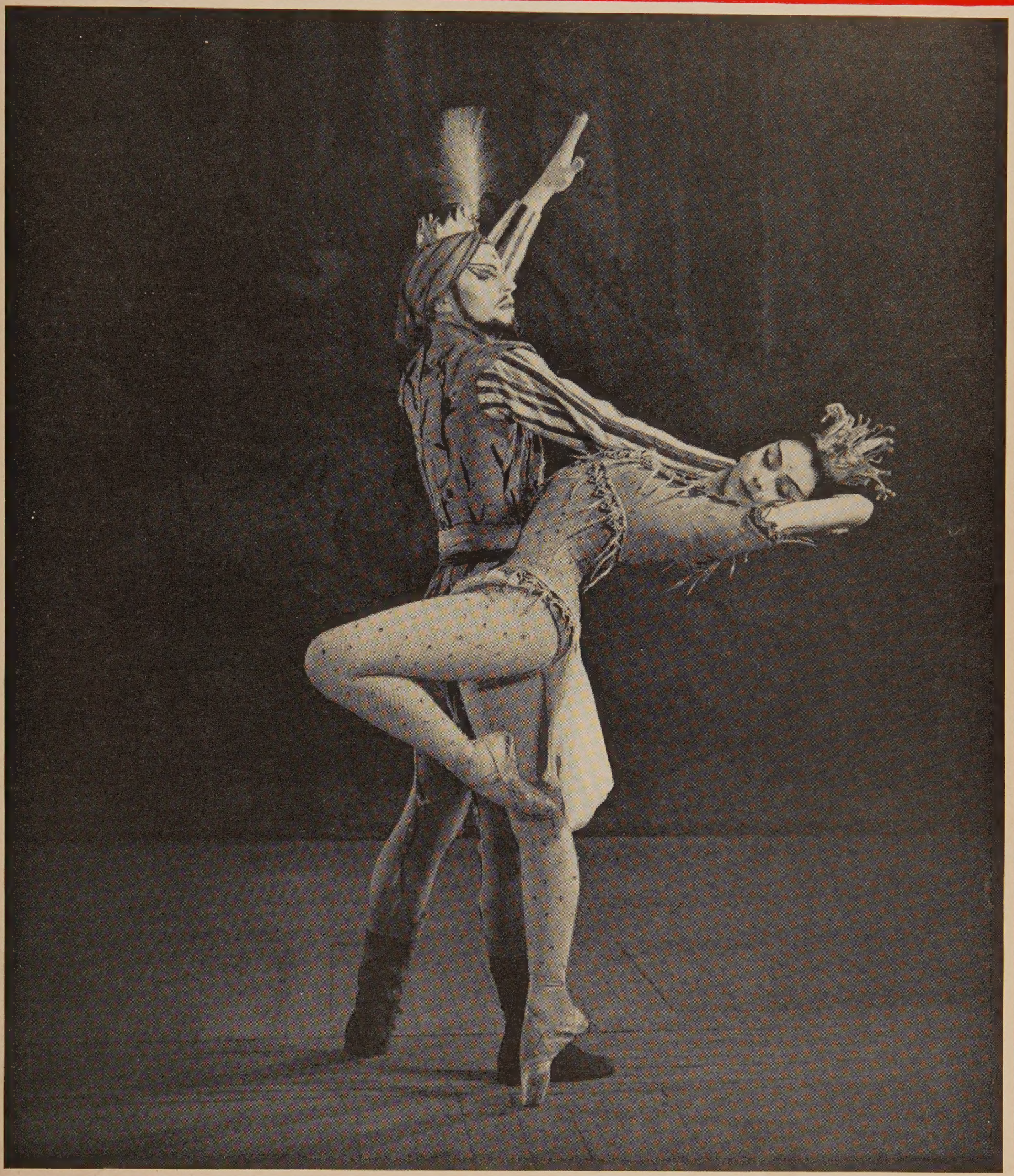

It's nice to be back in London. Anya Linden renews her acquaintance with the pigeons in Trafalgar Square. Miss Linden danced her first Aurora *in Los Angeles during the recent American tour. London saw her in this role for the first time on March 15th.*

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Margot Fonteyn and Michael Somes
in La Péri

A new and exclusive Ballet Today *photograph by* **Mike Davis**

Ballet TODAY

Established 1946

A MONTHLY REVIEW
DEVOTED TO DANCE
THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

EDITOR: ESTELLE HERF

No. 3 Vol. 11

Our next issue will be published on 30th April, 1958.

Our Backstage photograph this month is of Beryl Grey, pictured signing her autograph for Bolshoi dancer Victor Lavashov after her performance in Swan Lake at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow. Watching her is former Soviet ballerina Marina Semyonova.

BERYL GREY will be giving a talk "Dancing at the Bolshoi" at the Pushkin Club on Friday, March 28th.

STOP PRESS NEWS

Markova is returning to dance as Guest Prima Ballerina with London's Festival Ballet in many of the principal cities of Europe during the Company's forthcoming Continental Tour, and also during the Summer Season at the Royal Festival Hall.

SUNDAY CLUB

A Sunday Ballet Club has been formed to sponsor new ballets, encourage young choreographers and provide a creative centre where composers, designers, dancers, choreographers and enthusiasts can meet. The first performance of the Club has been given as taking place on Sunday, 23rd March at Wyndham's Theatre at 8 o'clock. Membership is open to all interested in ballet. The Hon. Treasurer is Mrs. E. M. Byrne, 23, Argyll Road, Kensington, the annual subscription is 7s. 6d.

LUISILLO

Luisillo and his Spanish Dance Theatre commenced a tour of Australia in Adelaide on January 29th. They had a four weeks' season at the Empire Theatre, Sydney and proceeded to Melbourne, after that they will play Newcastle and Brisbane.

WELL READ

One of our readers writes to say that after he has read his copy of *Ballet Today* each month he sends it on to a teacher of English in the South of France. All her pupils read it "from the first page to the last line" and then it goes into the library for the use of English visitors. I wonder just how many people do read this one copy!

FASHION SHOW

Tights and leotards made of Helanca, a stretch yarn made of nylon, were featured in a fashion show held in London during March. Hitherto imported, they were rather expensive. Now made in England it has been found possible to put them on the market at a more moderate price. A feature of the tights made of this yarn is their complete elasticity and recovery.

BACKSTAGE

THE ROYAL BALLET

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother and H.R.H. Princess Margaret are to be present at a Gala Performance at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden on Tuesday, March 27, 1958 at 8 p.m. H.R.H. Princess Margaret is President of the Royal Ballet.

This performance will be given in aid of The Royal Ballet Benevolent Fund and The Royal Ballet School Fund for Students and the entire Company, including all the principals, will dance.

The programme includes the first performance of the revival of Robert Helpmann's ballet *Hamlet* to Tchaikovsky's music. Robert Helpmann will dance the title rôle and Anya Linden will dance Ophelia. In addition the programme includes the ballet *La Peri* with Margot Fonteyn and Michael Somes, Kenneth Macmillan's ballet *Solitaire* and a number of Divertissements to be danced by the leading members of the Company.

YUGOSLAV BALLERINA TRAINS IN BRITAIN

Miss Dusanka Sifnios, 23 year-old leading ballerina of the Belgrade Ballet, has been awarded a bursary by the British Council to perfect her training at the Royal Ballet School.

Miss Sifnios was invited to study in Moscow, but chose instead to come to the Royal Ballet School in London, where she is now on a six months' course.

She began dancing at an early age and has already danced leading rôles in *Romeo and Juliet, Orpheus, Coppelia, The Miraculous Mandarin, Les Sylphides and Giselle.*

Miss Sifnios has toured Europe with the Belgrade Company and recently appeared in Vienna, Florence, Paris, Wiesbaden and Athens.

FESTIVAL BALLET ROMANCE

Congratulations to dancer Diane Westerman and Stage Manager Tony Gilpin, who have announced their engagement. Their marriage will take place at the Holy Trinity Church, Kingsway, London, on the 10th April.

GALA OPENING

Twelve members of the British Press have been invited to attend the Gala opening of the Festival Ballet which takes place in Paris on the 17th April at the Sarah Bernhardt Theatre. A special plane has been chartered by the Company, and after the show the British journalists are to meet members of the French press at a dinner. His Excellency the French Ambassador will be present. The Festival Ballet open their season with *The Witch Boy*, which had its première in Manchester and will be seen for the first time in London at the Company's summer season at the Festival Hall which opens in July.

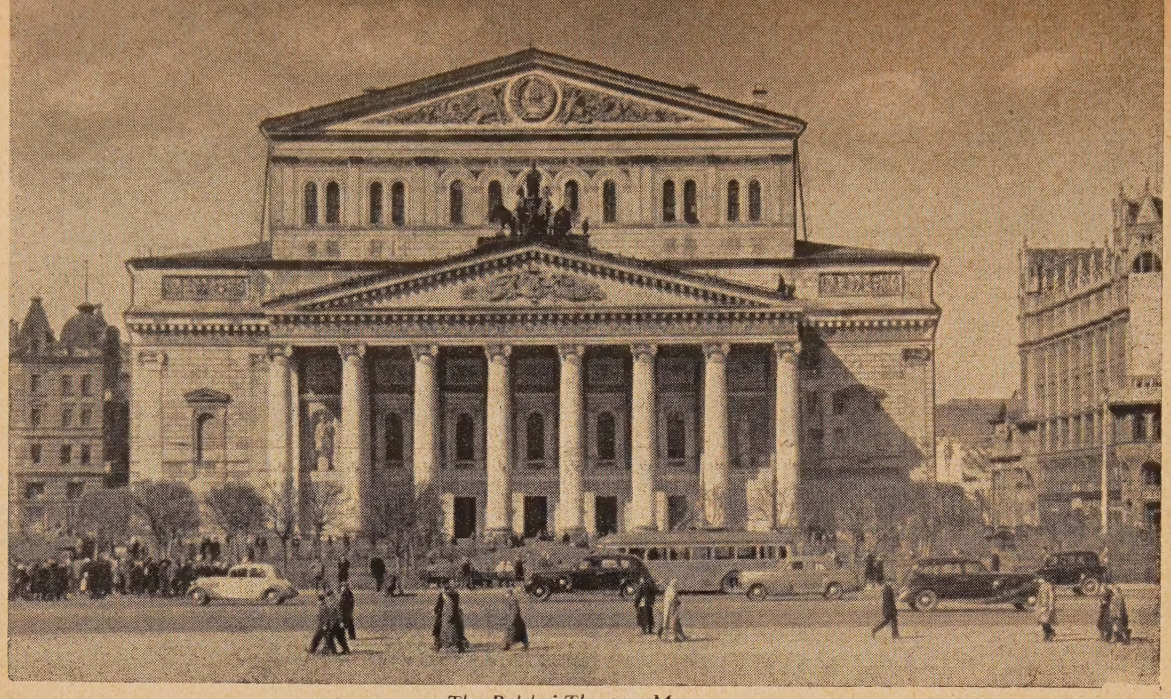
DAME NINETTE HAS HER WISH

Ever since Robert Helpmann left the Royal Ballet in 1950 Dame Ninette de Valois has been trying to persuade him to return, but except on one special occasion—the 25th Anniversary of the Sadler's Wells Ballet in 1956, when he danced "The Rake" and the Tango in *Façade*—this has been impossible because of his stage and film commitments. This season Helpmann returns as guest star to dance in five ballets, and will continue to dance the five rôles until the summer, when he leaves on an Australian tour.

ALICIA MARKOVA

Markova received a great welcome when she made her first appearance in London, following her very successful season in New York, in the Italian Opera's production of *William Tell* at Drury Lane Theatre on 28th February and *The Pearl Fishers* on March 12th, partnered by Borge Ralov, late of the Royal Danish Ballet. They were both seen again on television in the *Sunday Night at the Palladium* programme on March 2nd.

Next month :—Markova at Buckingham Palace.



The Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow

BERYL GREY

WHEN I saw Beryl Grey recently at a London reception she confessed to me "I haven't danced a step since I came home"—and I was not surprised, for in a matter of days she had given a talk on the BBC Home Service, appeared twice on television, and proposed the toast at Foyle's Literary Luncheon when His Excellency the Russian Ambassador had been the guest of honour, cut a ceremonial cake (again in the presence of Mr. Malik), to celebrate the appearance in London of the Ukrainian Cossack Company, which launched the Royal Albert Hall into show business for the first time in its long history. There was also a talk given by Beryl to the members of the London Ballet Circle, when the demand for tickets was so great that they had to take a larger hall than the one advertised. Then during the month she was Matron of Honour to Royal ballerina Rowena Jackson at her marriage in London to Philip Chatfield, also guest of honour at the International Theatre lunch. Finally she had the honour to sit in the Royal box with the Duke of Edinburgh at a film première. *The Sunday Times* commissioned Beryl to write three articles on her visit to the Bolshoi, and the interest in these was tremendous and world-wide. The popularity of these articles can be judged by the fact that the final article was given a full-page, a very rare event for news on ballet.

There is no doubt that Beryl Grey's charming personality, coupled with her brilliant dancing, completely took the Russians by storm. Every inch a ballerina, she is nevertheless a very sincere and modest person, and I cannot do better than to quote her own story of her tours as given on the BBC Home Service on January 28th.

"I can hardly believe that a short time ago I was in Moscow dancing at the famous Bolshoi Theatre. I am a Londoner by birth. It was here that I grew up as a little girl and it was here I first became acquainted with music and dancing, took my first lessons in ballet, and eventually became a ballerina in the Sadler's Wells Ballet. I belong to London.

"However, when I left the stage of Covent Garden, I was eager to try my wings in distant places. I had already been as far east as Finland and enjoyed dancing with the Company there very much. So I was, as it were, fully fledged when I abandoned the London nest. Nevertheless, it was not without some misgivings, naturally, that I set out with just a partner on my wanderings last year, and appearing with ballet companies. I gave recitals in theatres in South America and South Africa—in fact, in twelve countries."

SOUTH AFRICA AND SOUTH AMERICA

Beryl need not have had these misgivings, for almost as soon as she arrived in South Africa the *Johannesburg Star* said "she has a knack which endears her to newspapermen".

W.S.P. writing in *The Natal Mercury* after her first performance: "Applause was again a tumult . . . Durban has set the note of South Africa's welcome to a ballerina who is writing new history in the tradition of the British school". At a later performance he recorded: "The theatre was electrified into a tumult of adoration such as this stage has rarely seen . . . Miss Grey and her partner had made time stand still . . ."

K.W.M. of *The Durban Sunday Times* found that Beryl "moved with equal versatility through the dreaming measures of *Les Sylphides* the glittering enchainements of *Sylvia* and the Spanish flamboyancy, of *Don Quixote*. She moves like thistledown, her technique is superb."

Such then was Beryl Grey's reception in South Africa, and again in South America, and then came the offer to dance with the Bolshoi in Moscow. I will let Beryl continue her own story as broadcast.

"To go to Moscow and dance with the wonderful Bolshoi Ballet Company was a great challenge. Whilst attracting me immensely, it made me more anxious than any other venture had. There wasn't one who had done this before who could advise me. I was the first foreign guest ballerina to dance there. I wondered how I would get on with my Russian partner. Would the Bolshoi versions of *Swan Lake* and *Giselle* differ greatly from those with which I was familiar? I would only have a week of rehearsals there.

MOSCOW

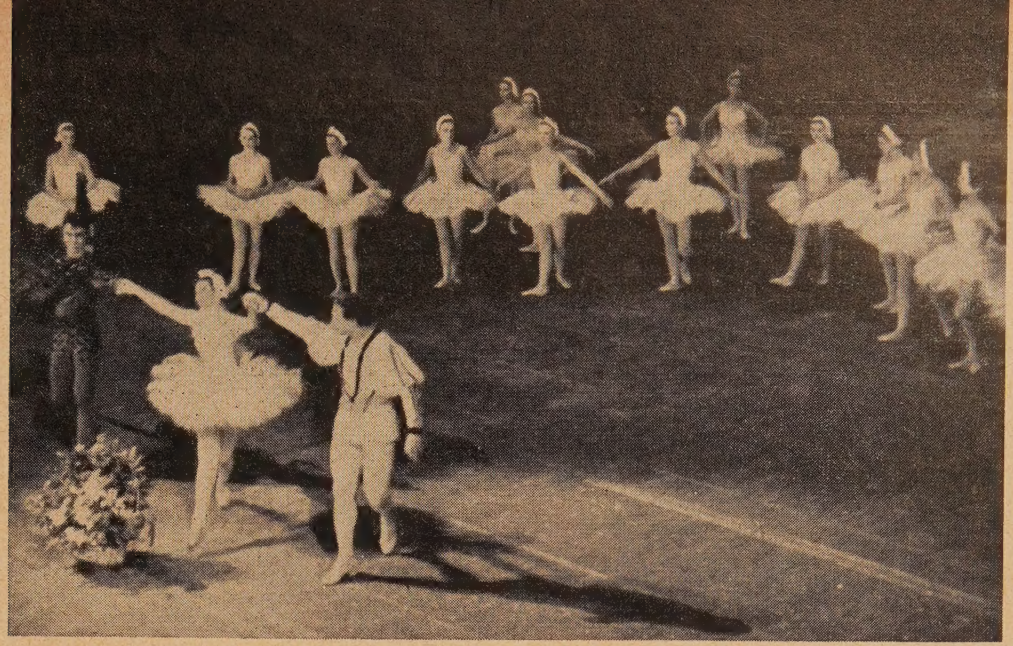
However after various vicissitudes, I did find myself on that great stage, and with a Russian partner, and it was more wonderful than I had ever thought possible.

From the stage one could see the beautiful auditorium of red and gold boxes, tier upon tier, rising up to a very finely decorated ceiling, with an enormous chandelier suspended from the centre.

LIVING AND SUSTAINING A ROLE

There was an atmosphere on that stage such as I have never felt in any other theatre in the world. One sensed so vividly its history and tradition, and amongst the artists there seemed to exist such great warmth and good feeling. Their love of dancing goes very deep. This warmth, sincerity and love was apparent all the time I was with them. It was inspiring to watch them dance, they have such fluid and expressive arms, and they are wonderfully light when they jump. I was impressed by their arched backs, their stretched feet and many other things besides, but what impressed me most was their great capacity for *living* a rôle. In the mad scene in *Giselle* for example, I felt that the dramatic tension they created on the stage heightened my own performance. Not only did they *live* it, but they *sustained* it at all performances. Obviously they have a strong dramatic technique as well as a highly developed dramatic sense.

The orchestra was superb. Imagine dancing to the accompaniment of about a hundred musicians under the leadership of a conductor who is familiar with every step of the ballet! At the Bolshoi this person was Yuri Faier, the most sympathetic conductor one could wish for. He attended all my rehearsals and his personal assistant played the piano. They seemed to grasp quickly what I wanted and adapted themselves to my choreography and tempi.



Beryl Grey takes a bow at the Bolshoi

IN RUSSIA

A WARM WELCOME

I remember well the first time I walked on to the Bolshoi stage. It was after watching an exciting performance of *Swan Lake* in which Maya Plissetskaya had danced the leading rôle. She is generally accepted as their finest Odette-Odile to-day, and the rest of the Company greeted me with loud applause. This also happened next morning when the director of the ballet took me to the company classes. Then again, too, on the stage before my "dress rehearsal" Mr. Faier gave a warm speech of welcome and introduced me to all the orchestra and they all stood up and clapped, it was really very moving.

The same sort of welcome was also given me by the audience, over two thousand strong. The very moment I made my entrance that opening night in *Swan Lake* there was a big burst of applause which continued for quite a little time. I knew then the audience were with me and eager to welcome a foreign artist. Maya Plissetskaya had written in a Moscow paper that my appearance was awaited with great interest, particularly as the English dancer was to dance *Swan Lake*, a ballet which makes so many and so varied demands on a performer, and is considered the zenith of Russian classical choreography . . . So I knew the English dancer was being watched critically as well.

The initial applause heartened me. It was nevertheless a great relief to hear the applause at the end of Act Two and at the final curtain, with all the ceremony of acknowledgments at different stations on that immense stage, so that one curtain call at the Bolshoi is equivalent to say three at Covent Garden.

Then, like most artists, I was anxious to see what sort of appreciation the critics had given me. I had the Russian press notices translated to me, and—well they gave me what I most needed—some further reassurance that I had not disgraced myself, or let down British ballet.

FIRST REHEARSAL WITH THE COMPANY

Speaking professionally, the tour was a hard one. I gave on an average three performances of full length classical ballets a week for three weeks (with long distance travelling squeezed in between too). Vachtang Chabukiani was originally intended to be my partner. He came all the way from Georgia where he now heads his own Company. After two days of rehearsal with him I felt the process of mutual adaptation was progressing well enough for me not to be intimidated at the thought of taking my first rehearsal on the stage with the company. However, just as I was going on the stage the next day the director and other members of the staff appeared with such serious faces I thought someone had died, they said Chabukiani had injured his knee and wouldn't be able to dance after all. Before I had recovered from my bewilderment I was rehearsing with a new partner, Yuri Kondratov, who partners Plissetskaya and Ulanova herself, and a more understanding and sensitive partner I could not have wished for. On my last day of rehearsal however I caught a bad chill, and had to postpone my opening performance for two days.

I danced both *Swan Lake* and *Giselle*, and found that the choreography in Russia differed considerably from the British versions I know, and also from company to company. This shows that there is nothing rigid in their traditions, on the contrary, they are marked by flexibility, but four different versions in three weeks meant quite a lot of extra rehearsals!

For instance, the fourth Act of *Swan Lake* as given by the Bolshoi is completely different from the Covent Garden version. Both musically and choreographically. Most of the music in this Act I hadn't heard before—I even enquired if it was Tchaikovsky. This fourth Act is about ten minutes longer and has a tremendous amount of pas de deux and solo dancing in it. There are many big lifts with both the Prince and the evil Magician—lifts such as those at arms-length which I had never done before and which, much to my great delight, I learned to do quite quickly. The men are of course very well trained in all types of partnering.

SOUTH TO KIEV

After Moscow we went south to Kiev, the capital of the Ukraine.

Then much farther south to Tiflis—or Tbleezi as they call it in Russia; the capital of Georgia which lies between the Caspian and the Black Seas. After that, we returned again to Moscow and travelled further north to Leningrad. So suppose we must have covered many thousands of miles.

We travelled everywhere by 'plane, except on the journey from Moscow to Leningrad and back, then we went overnight by the famous Red Arrow train. This was extremely comfortable, I must say (and I liked looking out across the moonlit flat countryside covered in snow and ice. I only wish I had been as comfortable on the planes. Each time the plane took off and landed, it was at such a sharp angle I had a terrible pain in my ears and neck—and my Russian partner did too.

Kiev, they say, is one of the most beautiful cities, with its many parks and trees overlooking the River Dnjeper. In winter it doesn't look as attractive, on the day we saw it a mist was rising from the melting snow. "Very unusual, they said, for this time of the year." I managed to visit two Churches, both containing richly decorated Ikons and hundreds of murals. At one, a Russian Orthodox service was in progress. It was full of people—mostly over the age of about forty, I would have thought—although I was interested to see several young priests officiating. And then the other one I visited was the famous Cathedral of St. Sophia, built sometime in the eleventh century, I believe. I had been intrigued by a distant glimpse of gleaming golden domes and wanted to have a closer look. Apparently they belonged to this famous cathedral, formerly connected by a turret with the Prince's Palace, now being restored as a museum, and much work was going on there. On many walls several layers of paintings, from different periods, were being uncovered. I liked very much the Frescoes of eleventh century court life which included curious scenes from the circus rather as though a Byzantine Dame Laura Knight has been at work there.

TIFLIS

The city of Tiflis excited me because of its distinctly Eastern feeling. The cypress trees dotted along the hillsides reminded me immediately of Persian miniatures, and the streets were gay with the bright-coloured skirts of the women. On one side of the River Kura—which flows eastwards into the Caspian Sea—there is a long rocky precipice on top of which is a Palace, it has also been a prison and a church. Up here too, amidst quaint little old houses, are the hot springs that give Tiflis its Georgian name: Tbleezi. I gathered from my guide, and from the many people who came up to me in the streets, that Georgia is very proud of its long history.

Near Tiflis is a hill or mountain with a huge "Park of Rest and Culture." We were reminded that both Stalin and Gorki were born in these parts. I went up by funicular railway one Saturday night to the Television Studio and a very beautiful sight one had from there. The T.V. Studio has only been open a year. I was interviewed and presented with a most beautiful basket of Georgian wild berries and flowers and little ceramic pots.

Unfortunately with such a heavy schedule of rehearsing, performing and travelling, I wasn't able to see as much of Russia as I had hoped.

In Moscow my husband and I managed only one brief shopping expedition into shops seething with people. Fortunately we had V.I.P. treatment, and didn't require queue tickets, so we were able to go to the head of the queue and be served immediately. We were also able to see parts of the Kremlin. In one building we saw the famous collection of Crown Jewels, costumes and coaches, and thousands of presents to the Czar of Russia. We had a quick look at the Kremlin's three Churches which all face onto the same square. This was on our last and coldest day in Russia, my breath was freezing on my fur collar, but, it didn't seem to worry the long queues of sightseers.

LENINGRAD

In Leningrad we visited the Hermitage to see one of the biggest collections of paintings in the world and we lingered there for almost three hours.

The exquisite building in which these treasures are displayed is the old winter Palace of the Czars. It looks out across the River Neva, which was frozen over and covered with snow.

Leningrad is such a beautifully laid out city. It has so many straight, wide streets, numerous canals and countless bridges and squares. I danced in the famous Maryinsky Theatre, now re-named the Kirov: it is smaller than the Bolshoi but has a beautifully decorated interior in gold, blue and white, and is particularly well proportioned.

CHRISTMAS IN RUSSIA

Altogether I was four-and-a-half weeks in the U.S.S.R. I was curious to see what the Russian people do in the festive season. They don't celebrate Christmas. Instead, January the first is a holiday for everyone, and parties are thrown on New Year's Eve to welcome the New Year. For a week or more, fir trees were being erected in all the main squares, the streets and shops, which are decorated in much the same way as the ones at home are for Father Christmas. To distribute the presents on New Year's Eve comes "Father Frost."

January the first happened to be the day I gave my last performance of *Swan Lake* at the Bolshoi Theatre. That evening, before the curtains opened, the Director of the Ballet spoke to the whole company, wishing them every success in the New Year, etc. I was told that this would be the eight-hundredth performance of *Swan Lake* in this theatre. Now whenever I hear the music of this ballet it will take me back to all these friends, and will always remind me of the great inspiration that dancing at the Bolshoi gave me."

And I have no doubt that Beryl left many new friends in Russia for wherever she goes her integrity as an artist and her warm endearing personality can only add to Britain's prestige amongst the peoples of other nations.

E.H.

PUSHKIN CLUB

24, Kensington Park Gardens, W.11.

Park 7696

Friday, March 28th at 8 p.m.

BERYL GREY

on

"DANCING AT THE BOLSHOI"

In the Chair: Marie Rambert.

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Closing of the Paris Opéra

ON Friday, 21st February, the French government decided to suspend performances in the Opéra and the Opéra Comique in Paris. This move was taken because of the numerous strikes which have taken place in these theatres. The Opéra corps de ballet who had refused to guarantee any ballet performances which took place on a Wednesday, was found to have broken its contract, and was entirely disbanded with the exception of the stars (who had not gone on strike and do not belong to a union). This corps de ballet will be re-formed at some quite distant date. It would consist of artists taken from the Opéra school and from outside. The dismissed artists will not in any case be re-engaged collectively. Those wishing to return to the Opéra will have to undergo an individual examination. It seems necessary on this occasion, to state precisely and impartially, what were the problems facing the two French lyrical theatres and their corps de ballet. I would however point out that the corps de ballet at the Opéra Comique has not been dismissed.

The French Ministry of Education has just been forced to make a distressing and harsh decision: the disbanding of the Opéra corps de ballet. This stern measure was taken to check the systematic strikes organised by the artists of this national institution which affected the weekly performances devoted exclusively to the choreographic art. In actual fact, the strikes were rather more serious: the technical personnel (machinists and electricians also hit by a collective measure of dismissal) for their part, pursued a similar course of demands and the majority of the lyrical performances had to be cancelled. The result of this uncertainty of programme meant that the public lost interest, for they obviously feared that in coming to the Opéra they might waste an evening.

At the Opéra Comique, the movement was less serious as far as the dancers were concerned, in the sense that their leaders had not planned systematic strikes on ballet evenings and it must be stressed that only the technicians at this theatre showed an uncompromising attitude which prevented the carrying out of the programmes.

The dancers' salary scale at the Opéra is not exactly lavish. It is similar to that of the majority of intellectuals in France, who are singularly underpaid by comparison with technicians and even workmen (a professional journalist working on a daily paper earns much less than the starting wage of a typographer). However, it seems clear that the moment was not very well chosen for making a demand of this kind: French finances, which would have had to stand the cost, are not in a particularly brilliant state. Other problems, in their way more pressing, affect them and have not been solved. The income of a dancer at the Opéra does not allow him to dine "chez Maxim's" every evening but does allow him to maintain a certain standard of living.

Another aspect of the demands took on a disagreeable character: the dancers asked for a reduction in the number of "commitments," that is to say the application of a work time-table already very reduced by comparison with that in operation in the large private companies. Although the wages paid in these companies are at times (but not always) a little higher, they are unstable, and this does not apply to the Opéra.

Another point to be considered in this discussion is the lack of professional conscience of many members of the Opéra corps de ballet. It is deplorable to note that, despite all the efforts made in this respect, the ensemble has never been perfect: it was never possible to get complete silence on stage (notably during the "defilé" of the corps de ballet when the curtain always rose on a loud, unseemly clamour) and to avoid the stifled laughs and the uncalled-for jokes (especially during the mad scene in *Giselle*, when there was general hilarity amongst the vineyard workers who are witnessing this dramatic moment in the ballet).

The dismissal of the Opéra corps de ballet has hit the artistic much more than the administrative side of the theatre against which it was aimed. It is only fitting that the artists of our foremost national lyrical theatre should show signs of the dignity which theoretically this title should confer upon them. However, the decision taken is harsh in the sense that it hits those members of the Opéra corps de ballet who do not share the deplorable mood of the others. They are exceptions who are not to be neglected since they take a firm stand and are that much more praiseworthy than a certain "esprit maison" which ragged and made fun of those who were above all artists rather than "workers in the theatre."

For my part, I must say that there are some male artists I would not miss even if I never saw them on a stage again. I do not want to discuss here technical abilities but I must say that their behaviour on stage has only too often been scandalous. In their case it is much more than a lack of discipline due to a pronounced individuality. In fact, what is so reprehensible about these gentlemen, apart from a general negligence in their performance, is the almost systematic disturbance of the spectacles with the sort of silly pranks not to be tolerated from school-

and the Opéra Comique

boys and which the excellent, one might almost say too excellent, acoustics "allow" the audience to share.

On the other hand, there are other dancers I would miss very much if I did not see them again. I have already had the opportunity to speak about some of these; Gilbert Mayer for example should by virtue of his artistic qualities and his serious, honest attitude to his work be chosen to take his place in a new corps de ballet.

There are others who seem to me to deserve to return with honour to the Opéra, leaving aside judgment of their attitude to the administration. Labis is one of these. Up to now he has only been rarely seen it is true, but he gave signs of interesting qualities which he must develop by strenuous work, for he is not faultless. The same may be said of Herault. They both need to discipline themselves and to spend a little time in the corps de ballet until wisdom comes to them . . .

I have also a great liking for Dussaigne, a very young man who is not lacking in talent. He suffers from an examination psychosis: he is incapable of passing them, but this does not in any way diminish his value. There are others such as Frank whose remarkable bearing places him amongst the real artists, young Delrieu, René Blum prize-winner for 1957, a gifted beginner who is capable of becoming an excellent dancer, Sarelli, Rousselle . . .

On the female side there are also some bad elements which I hope will disappear. However, to be just, it must be said that professional conscience is more developed amongst them than amongst the men. The danseuses seemed to me to be rather the victims than the promoters of disorder on stage.

There is something that I would point out namely, that it is difficult, but not strictly speaking impossible, for foreign dancers to appear at our national theatres. It is much to be desired that it should be demonstrated to those who have not enjoyed the privilege of being a dancer at the Paris Opéra that only those who served their Art conscientiously are indispensable.

There are so many good elements in France! Which makes this state of affairs even more deplorable. Roland Petit for example, is presenting in his new spectacle artists of the class of the incomparable Zizi Jeanmaire, Jane Laoust a prodigious technician, the charming Dick Sanders, that modern young man Rino Adipietro and the spirited José Ferran a comic not to be equalled.

The mood at the Opéra Comique is altogether different. Though smaller, the ballet has qualities which are lacking amongst the vast ensemble at the Opéra. Led with a great deal of energy and competence by their maître de ballet Gerard Mulys, the artists have always shown such pleasure in their dancing that the audience could not be indifferent to them. The repertoire which is being built up needs to be further selected and enlarged. Where this company is concerned recent events do not call for any comment, but provide the opportunity for mentioning the principal dancers.

Espanita Cortez, première star danseuse at the Opéra and the Opéra Comique and choreographer at this last theatre where she created many ballets with a Spanish inspiration (*L'Amour Sorcier*, *Alborada del Graciozo*, divertissement de la *Poule Noire*, etc.) came from the Paris Conservatoire where she studied music seriously whilst she was taking dancing classes. She chose to be a character dancer and has specialised in this sphere ever since. After giving many recitals on tour, she finally settled at the Opéra Comique.

Maryelle Krempf is a classical dancer who formerly left the Opéra to make a brilliant career for herself in the provinces and then at the Châtelet where her fouettés won her distinction. Promoted to the Opéra Comique, she dances chiefly the *Black Swan* and *Le Beau Danube*.

Ninon Lebertre comes from the Conservatoire where she won a first prize which granted her admission to the Opéra Comique. After climbing to the top brilliantly, she was engaged as a star dancer in the provinces. She is once again at the Opéra Comique as a guest star dancer.

Michel Rayne began to study dancing quite late, but this has not prevented him from becoming a star caractère and demi-caractère dancer. After a period with the Ballet de Monte Carlo, he danced for a long time in the provinces before his nomination to the Opéra Comique as a star dancer.

Jean Bernais Lemoine came from the Opéra. A star with the Grand Ballet de Monte Carlo and with Roland Petit, he has, although still very young, a very rich career behind him.

What distinguishes most favourably the Opéra Comique company is without doubt its homogeneity and its faith.

Even if there are in the corps de ballet some dancers of very debatable value, even if the efforts of the artists receive very little support from a rather undistinguished orchestra, this company has qualities of youth and faith which lead one to predict a brilliant future for them when an enlarged and revised repertoire will easily conquer a public for them.

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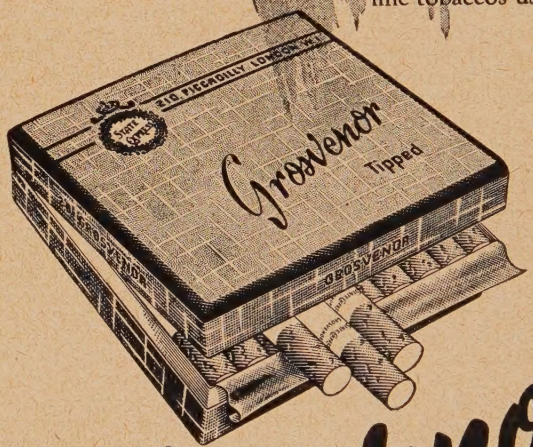

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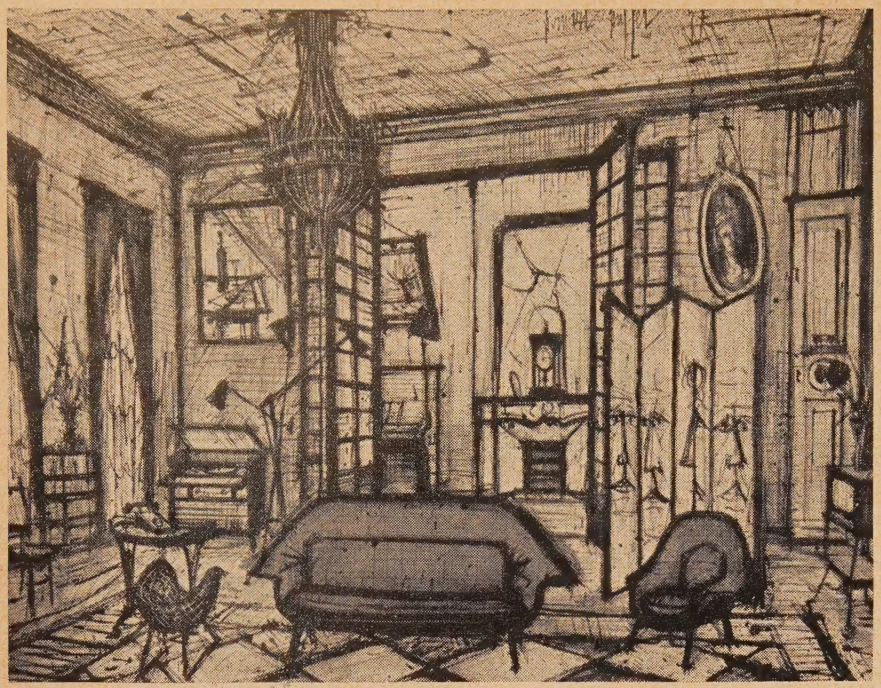


Decor for the first and second act, by Bernard Buffet.
Photo: Serge Lido.

THE SAGAN BALLET

IN twenty-five years I had seen nothing quite like it at a ballet first night. Taking note of the barrage of advance publicity, the authorities had sent a large number of policemen and policewomen to control the crowd—and they were all needed. Photographers thronged the entrance so that it was difficult to push through, and each starlet made an entrance as if on to a stage. The curtain went up twenty-five minutes late; was this because of a technical hitch, or to accommodate the photographers?

It was, of course, the première at the Dominion Theatre of what the programme described as "Fran oise Sagan's *The Broken Date*," presented by the Rank Organisation. While waiting for the curtain to go up, we had ample leisure to read about Mlle. Sagan:

"Her wonderful imagination in creating *Le Rendez-Vous Manqué* makes the ballet a landmark in the history of dance, and brings to it all the verve and excitement of the young generation, and equally her choice of associates on its production makes *Le Rendez-Vous Manqué* the most important theatrical event of 1958."

It is hard to work out just *what* Mlle. Sagan had to do with this production. Certainly she did not write the story: such as it is, this was dreamed up by the two choreographers and the producer Roger Vadim. My own guess is that she had the vague ideas which were written out in longhand on the backcloths. One thing is certain; it was the Sagan name which made the production possible, for it guaranteed enormous advance publicity. I find nothing wrong in this; all new ballets need publicity, and good luck to those which get all they need. What is depressing is that all the publicity, all the money and all the hard work of the dancers (some of them with real talent) was wasted on something both dull and démodé. So far from being "a landmark in the history of the dance," *The Broken Date* is a collection of very tired clichés. Even the eroticism which was supposed to be such a feature of the ballet resolved itself into two amorous pas de deux. One, which takes place in the bathroom between the Hero and the Vamp, is just about as daring as one might guess from the use of the word "Vamp." The other, a flashback to what the programme describes as "the flowering of their love," gave Toni Lander the opportunity to show a certain cool voluptuousness, but this was extremely tame compared with a large number of pas de deux in this genre in the ballets of Roland Petit (starring Zizi Jeanmaire), Balanchine, Ashton (particularly his arrangements for Margot Fonteyn in *Tiresias*), Tudor, and a good many others. The fact is that choreographers have been working in this genre ever since Fokine arranged *Schéhérazade* in 1910. As for the party scene, choreographed by Don Lurio, this has been better done in a score of American stage and screen musicals, not to mention ballets like *Fancy Free*.

Noelle Adam, looking like Brigitte Bardot only more so, was undeniably fetching in her tight sweater and black tights. Her personality came over well, though she had little real dancing to do. It is said that she came from a night club; I cannot believe she will ever return to it. Vladimir Skouratoff is a male dancer with a strong technique and a rare talent which has never developed, for lack of contact with choreography worthy of it; I still hope to see him in a great role (such as Petrushka) which will enable him to mature artistically. It was very bad luck for him to be "off" at the première; Taras made nothing of the hero.

Though a number of people admired the decors of Bernard Buffet (even if they disliked all else), I found them very unsuitable for ballet. The drab brown colour became depressing after a few minutes, and the fussy black drawings and handwriting broke up the line of the dancing. As for Michel Magne's music, this alternated between the sentimental and the clever-clever; and in fact was only too faithful to the spirit of the ballet as a whole.

ROYAL BALLET

Very welcome was the return to Covent Garden of the Royal Ballet's main company after its long and exhausting tour in America. In fact the company showed surprisingly few signs of wear and tear when it opened with *Sylvia*. Margot Fonteyn looked a little thinner, but was in splendid form; she danced the delightful pas de deux in Act III with even more radiance and spontaneity than ever, and looked no more than sixteen at the most. Maryon Lane, taking over the female goat, built up the role with her usual intelligence, wit and musicality, making of it something quite individual. Julia Farron put such fire and dramatic intensity into Diana that the rather conventional quality of this role was quite transformed. Annette Page is not as versatile, inventive and musical as Maryon Lane and Julia Farron, but she has real ability, and did well as Ceres. It is gratifying that the talents of Maryon Lane and Annette Page have now been recognised in the "line-up" in the programme; first come the ballerinas and premier danseurs, and then a ruled line followed by five leading female soloists in alphabetical order:

JULIA FARRON MARYON LANE ANYA LINDEN
ROSEMARY LINDSAY ANNETTE PAGE

Unfortunately nearly all the best of Ashton's choreography for *Sylvia* is concentrated in Act III. There is a splendid moment in Margot Fonteyn's performance in Act I when she makes a fiery gesture of anger and denunciation which flings Aminta (Michael Somes) to the ground; and it is always a pleasure to watch her play of facial expression as she lures Orion into a drunken stupor in Act II. But it seems a pity that we cannot sometimes see Act III on its own, with two contrasting one-act ballets: and why not the Act III pas de deux on its own, as a makeweight to a programme with three medium-length ballets?

THE UKRAINIANS

We have seen a good number of folk-dance companies in London in the last ten years; but the Ukranian State Cossack Company

which appeared at the Albert Hall for a fortnight ranks with the best of them. Production was fluid and intelligent, with dance following dance without the choral songs which normally break the atmosphere in such shows. The numerous soloists showed a very high standard of grace, vigour, pace and elevation, performing Ukranian steps such as the "cobbler" (which demand great strength in the thighs and back) so easily that they seemed child's play. In he group dances all the artists performed with artistry and individuality, and showed fine understanding of the nuances of style required by the dances of the different regions—such as the *Tropotianka* from the Carpathian Ukraine, close to Czech dances in style, and the noble simplicity of the Great Russian woman's *Hora*. The two high-points of the programme were *Zaporojhtsi* and *Gopak*; the former showed military evolutions with spears, performed with a precision and fire recalling the Bolshoi men in the Tartar dances in *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai*, while the latter showed a thrilling cascade of virtuosity, with the leaps and spins becoming more and more impossibly fast. While watching these Gopak dancers I was reminded of the Polish and Russian dancers of the de Basil company in its palmiest days in the middle thirties, performing *Petrushka* in a way to set the Neva on fire; and I realised with uncomfortable precision just what is lacking in the Royal Ballet's performance of this masterpiece.

Generally speaking the Ukranian show maintained an admirably consistent artistic standard, with even tne smallest details (such as make-up and the fitting of moustaches) carefully regulated. The only serious flaw was in the choice of material for some of the costumes; shiny satin does not suit traditional character dances, whatever the country.

PHÈDRE

Some of the most perfect expression through line and rhythmic movement was to be seen outside the dance world at the Mahatma Gandhi Hall; this was in the play *Phèdre*, presented as "theatre in the round" by Studio Theatre Ltd. Where did Margaret Rawlings learn such magnificent gestures? Here was the great tradition of classical acting applied to a great tragedy by Racine, almost unknown in England because of the difficulty of rendering his austere verse into English and the even greater difficulty of bringing it to life. Racine's art is very close to ballet in its formality, and Margaret Rawlings gave to every movement of her arms and head and to every facial expression, the same noble simplicity that one finds in the greatest classical dancers. Here was a performance which any dancer or choreographer could study with profit—particularly in view of the fact that at times the great actress was no more than ten feet away from the spectator. (Under such circumstances the slightest uncontrolled tension, such as a twitching finger or a blinking eyelid, is painfully visible; only an artist with supreme mastery of technique and style, and perfect understanding of the role, can carry conviction).

SINHALESE DANCER

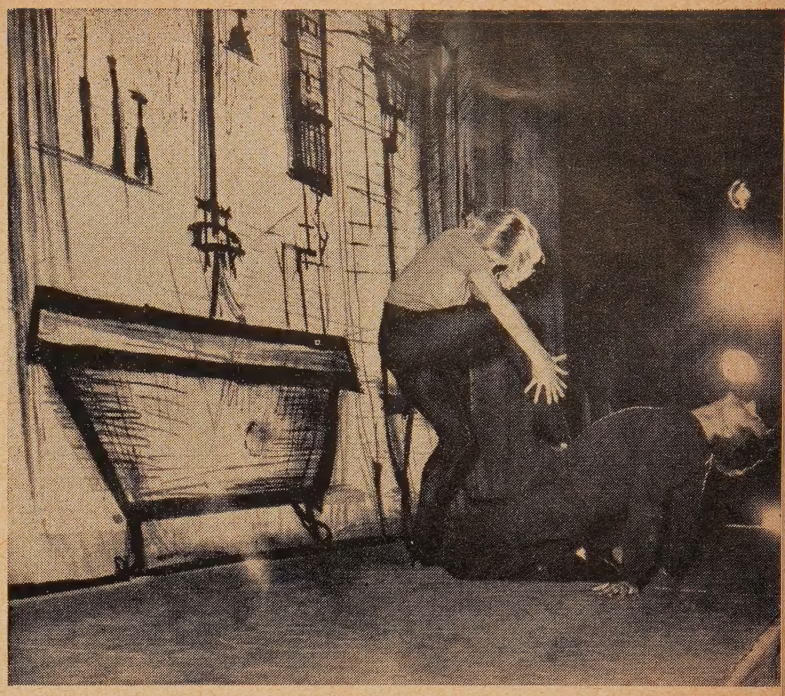
Not far away, in the School of Oriental and African Studies, the Sinhalese dancer Sesha Palihakkara gave a stimulating and enjoyable lecture-demonstration of all four of the great Indian classical dance-styles. His performance of a fine example of the lasya (feminine) branch of Manipuri was particularly interesting, for he developed quite new qualities of personality and fluidity; it was almost as if he became another person. The mystery was explained when he began to talk once again after completing the dance; he had spent several years at Tagore's university *Santineketan*, and there he studied the work of one great Manipuri danseuse so closely that he was able to reproduce her style completely. This programme formed part of a series on Asian music and dance, arranged by the Asian Music Circle in association with the University of London.

MARKOVA AND RALOV

The great Romantic ballerina Marie Taglioni danced in the opera *William Tell* at Drury Lane over a century ago, and no doubt this was one reason why S. A. Gorlinsky invited Markova to dance in this ballet during the recent season of Italian opera at Drury Lane. Markova, very sensibly, arranged for herself various enchaînements of simple steps which showed her to much better advantage than in some of her other London appearances in recent years—even if these enchaînements were certainly rather different from those used by Taglioni, who had a very strong technique and high elevation. Markova was partned by the great Danish dancer Borge Ralov, who performed his own variation with wonderful simplicity and nobility; the Royal Danish Ballet suffered as much from the departure of Borge Ralov as the Sadler's Wells Ballet suffered from the departure of Robert Helpmann.

HELPMANN

Helpmann's return as a guest artist was of course a major event. Interviewed on the radio on the morning of his first appearance, Helpmann—answering a question about what it felt like to return to Covent Garden after seven years—replied with a neat display of the somewhat cynical and affected humour typical of theatricals: "people just said 'Good Morning'." He might never have been away!



Rehearsal picture of John Taras with Noelle Adam in the bathroom scene.

Certainly that was the impression he created as soon as he began to dance in *The Rake's Progress*. His line and rhythm were as perfect as ever, and his acting even better; he said on the radio that all dancers should be actors, all actors dancers, and gave meaning to this remark by a performance of greater richness and intensity than those which he achieved before taking up an acting career. His first entrance into the gambling den, for example, was a model of concentration and perfect timing; just for a moment he established by his pose as he leant on the door all the degeneration in the Rake's character since we last saw him. The great test of any Rake is of course the mad dance in Scene VI; here Helpmann rose to the occasion magnificently, putting a new quality of mad slack-limbed desperation into his arm movements. (Only the most superb control could suggest the lack of control of a madman so perfectly, keeping the expression in perfect line and rhythm so that it built up to a musical and dramatic climax that was deeply satisfying.)

This was the best performance of *The Rake's Progress* since the gala for the 25th birthday of the company. This ballet never used to seem quite at home at the Garden; somehow its special quality seemed to get lost in the big theatre. But the new production with Helpmann is quite successful, proving that there was nothing about the ballet demanding a relatively small theatre. The artists were obviously keyed up by playing opposite Helpmann, and no less obviously had been rehearsed with great attention to detail by their choreographer, Ninette de Valois. The scene with the four madmen, in particular, is now very clearly articulated, and grows in intensity, whereas before it showed a slight tendency to drag: all four madmen (Ray Powell, Franklin White, Pirmin Trecu and Gary Burne) gave strong performances. Gerd Larsen is better than ever as a shameless hussy doing a dance on a table top. Brian Shaw made an elegant dancing master, with a suitably clean execution of the steps, but I missed the testiness which Harold Turner brought to this part. Julia Farron's Betrayed Girl was so affecting, growing in depth from scene to scene, that she quite properly shared the ovation given to Helpmann at the end; looking back over quite a number of dancers who have taken over this role since the middle thirties, I think Julia Farron's interpretation of the "sewing" dance the best of all; and it was her affecting performance in the last scene which enabled Helpmann to make the climax of the ballet so effective. Outstanding solo performances are by no means uncommon at Covent Garden, but it is very rare to see outstanding artists playing together so well, each reacting appropriately to every nuance in the performance of the other. Both Helpmann and Julia Farron are exceptionally musical, and they responded well to the sensitive phrasing of the Company's new musical director Hugo Rignold, who seems likely to be a valuable acquisition.

FERNAU HALL.

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t.v. REVIEW

DURING the past weeks there have been a number of interesting Ballet programmes, both on television and sound radio. The first of these was a recorded conversation on the third programme between Peter Ustinov and his great uncle Alexander Benois. Benois talked of his memories of the past 87 years. He spoke with nostalgia and affection of the Maryinsky Theatre, and said he was pleased to hear that the Russian approach to the theatre is still one of extreme piety and reverence. Diaghilev, he described as a savage young man. They often quarrelled, but he holds him in great veneration, and said the creation of the Ballets Russes would have been impossible without him. When speaking of Nijinsky, he said he had appeared to him to be practically dumb, and that it was hard to believe that genius could be in this insufficient and uninspiring frame. He went on to describe in detail the story of how the ballet *Petrouchka* was conceived and finally produced.

Another talk was given on the Home Service by Beryl Grey, who spoke of her recent visit and appearance at the Bolshoi Theatre, Moscow. This was especially interesting as Miss Grey is the first foreign artist to appear there since the Revolution.

In *Chelsea at Nine*, on February 4th, Giselle Deege, ballerina from the Berlin and Hamburg State Operas, and her partner George Volk, appeared in a pas de deux from a ballet called *Mirror of Memory*. The dancing of both these artists was excellent and there were some very good close ups. The choreography did not convey much of the story, but there were some interesting lifts in it.

The most disappointing programme was on Saturday, February 8th, when a full hour was devoted to Dance in *The World our Stage*. From the title, I expected a serious programme on the subject of Dance, but I soon realised my mistake: this was very like a variety show. Time, which should be precious in covering such a vast subject, was thrown away on some songs at the piano, an amusing monologue, a short play and a lot of talk by compère Jack Hawkins. The only items worthy of the name dance, were the opening number, the closing musical comedy number (danced by that delightful artist Elizabeth Seal partnered by Irving Davies) and the Black Swan pas de deux (danced by Rowena Jackson and Philip Chatfield). What was quite unforgivable was cutting the solos of this last number. This showed an almost unbelievable lack of judgment on the part of the producer, Francis Essex.

Sunday, February 9th. B.B.C. Television. Journey into Melody.

Included in this programme of music and song was a ballet sequence entitled *A la Claire Fontaine*. The choreography was by Jack Carter and the dancers were Dianne Westerman and John Gilpin. The story of the ballet was of a young man who imagines his lost love has returned to him. John Gilpin gave a brilliant and moving performance as the young man, but Dianne Westerman was not very impressive as his lost love.

Tuesday, February 11th. Chelsea at Nine—Granada. The Broken Date.

It was very enterprising of Granada to give a preview of this headline news ballet. Viewers were shown a brief excerpt from Act I and a good deal of Act II. The last act (Act III) was omitted as it was stated that viewers could visit the theatre to see this. The sets of Act I, depicting the first meeting of the lovers in the park, looked most effective on television. This short dance excerpt was competently done by Toni Lander, and Vladimir Skouratoff gave a dramatic and intense performance as the young man. In Act II, I disliked the pas de deux of the clock hands but the limelight of this act is on the vamp, danced by Noelle Adam. This is a most attractive and fascinating young woman, whose looks and figure certainly made one think the choreography was far more daring than it was in reality.

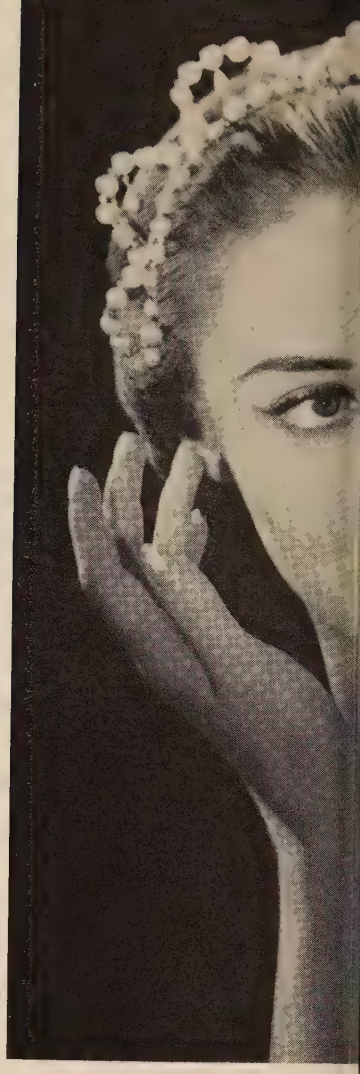
Tuesday, February 18th. Chelsea at Nine—Granada. Les Sylphides.

The pas de deux and valse brilliante which end the ballet of *Les Sylphides* was danced by Natalie Krassovska and John Gilpin supported by the corps de ballet of the Festival Ballet Company. This was well presented against a rather wintry looking background which I did not find displeasing. It was well danced by all concerned and John Gilpin managed to look outstanding even in this minor rôle.

Granada are certainly doing a wonderful job on this programme in presenting a wide variety of ballet excerpts. I hope they will continue with this policy and perhaps give a chance to some young local choreographers to create ballets specially for television.

HELEN ROSS.

Photo : Hamilton Wal



TONI

TONI LANDER was born in Copenhagen in 1931. Her first dancing teacher was Leif Oernberg. He saw the potential ballerina in Toni when she was only six years old, but her mother was against the very idea of a stage career. It was another pupil's mother who brought home the form for entry to the Royal Danish Ballet School in an effort to try and persuade Toni's parents to take advantage of her talent. Mrs. Pihl then tried to bribe her eight-year-old daughter to give up dancing. "As children, our allowance was very small," said Toni Lander. "Two crowns was a lot of money to me then, and my mother took care to explain that with such a large sum I could buy as many sweets as I could eat and more besides. The only condition about the gift was that I must give up dancing."

Politely but firmly she told her family she would prefer to continue dancing and they could keep the two crowns. This determination finally made her mother give way and Toni was enrolled as a pupil at the famous Royal Theatre School.

The school, like our own Royal Ballet School, provides a complete general education but has the additional advantage that its young pupils appear on the stage in those productions which require children. Toni Lander told me that she recalled standing on the bridge with other children looking down on the ballet *Napoli* wondering if she too would ever be a ballerina. The idol of her childhood days was Danish ballerina, Margot Lander.

At the age of fourteen she announced to her surprised parents that when she grew up she had no intention of marrying any of the boys who were then her fellow students. If she married anyone it would be the ballet master, Mr. Lander. Little did she guess then that seven years later her teenage dream would come true, for in 1950 she did in fact marry Harald Lander.

Progress from the ballet school to the company is by examination, which Toni Lander passed with flying colours. She made her official debut in 1947, in a ballet little known outside Denmark; *Livjaegerne Paa Amager*. A disappointment at this period of her life came in connection with the ballet *Swan Lake*. When it was decided to mount a production of this classic work Toni Lander was chosen as one of the little swans. However the actual work of putting the ballet together took so long that by the time the opportunity to dance the rôle came along, Toni had grown so tall that it was impossible for her to appear as a little swan.

She says that tallness is a family trait and she describes her brother —a shipping executive—as "like me, much taller and very thin." Family ties are still very strong for Toni Lander. Last summer her brother came to London to see her dance and she writes frequently to her grandmother in Copenhagen. Writing to, or phoning her husband is something she never misses when they are parted for any length of time. The need for them occasionally to go separate ways to fulfil their careers is one of the few regrets she has about her profession. When they are at home together in Paris Toni Lander enjoys her domestic duties, although she confesses that all the additional chores of a ballerina such as washing tights and darning shoes have left her little time to become proficient as a cook. Both Toni and Harald Lander are fond of dogs and a cherished member of the family circle in Paris is their Alsation puppy.

The first parting for Toni and Harald Lander came only a year after their marriage when in 1951 they both left Denmark, Harald Lander to take up duties at the Paris Opéra and Toni Lander to dance in London with the Original Ballet Russe. Her first task was to master English, a language of which she had at that time only the most elementary schoolgirl's knowledge. When the Ballet Russe broke up Toni Lander too went to Paris. She says of the year that followed "At that time I regarded it as one of the unhappiest periods of my life. I resolved to give up ballet entirely and become just a housewife for I had neither job nor prospect of one. However, I now realise that an opportunity to rest, re-think and above all study with some of the

ANDER

most famous teachers in the world, among them Preobrajenska and Volinine was one of the most valuable sections of my career." (In Denmark, she had taken lessons with Volkova but unfortunately left the company only a month after Volkova's arrival.)

Then followed a spell at the Opéra Comique in Paris, the Granada Festival (Toni's first trip to Spain and dancing with Fonteyn and Somes) and on to Berlin to make a film *The Dancing Heart*. This was a straight film with ballet sequence appearing as part of the narrative and Toni Lander appeared as a dancer. Unfortunately she left Berlin before the film was finished and never had the opportunity of seeing herself on the screen.

It was television that brought Toni Lander into Festival Ballet. Dr. Braunsweg saw her dancing *Casse Noisette* partnered by Pierre Lacotte of the Paris Opéra and invited her to temporarily take the place of the then injured Krassovska. This was in 1954, and later when it was decided that Harald Lander should mount *Napoli* and then *Etudes* Toni Lander stayed on as principal dancer. Towards the end of 1957 she left Festival Ballet for a holiday and during that time was approached to appear in *The Broken Date*. This ballet's première was the second time she had performed before Princess Grace of Monaco, the first occasion being the Royal Wedding when all the Festival Ballet artists were invited to the reception.

Of *The Broken Date* itself, Toni Lander feels that too much publicity has been given to one small section of the work, giving those who have not seen it for themselves a quite false impression of the whole. She has found an entirely different type of work an exhilarating experience and a challenge. After the close of the London season she will go with the ballet to the United States. Her next definite commitment is then in Denmark, for she is still officially a member of the Royal Danish Ballet and, as she points out, she has well exceeded the usual three year term of absence given to its dancers.

Asked about her favourite rôle: Toni Lander said that when she was younger it was Odette in *Swan Lake*, but as she has gained more experience she has more fully understood the depth the work demands. The ballets which give her most pleasure to dance are *Napoli* and *Etudes*. The only major classic rôle she has yet to tackle is *Giselle*, and here the integrity of Toni Lander's delightfully modest personality shines forth. "I believe" she says, "that Giselle, like Shakespeare's Juliet, although the part of a very young girl, should only be danced by the most mature of artists. Before I could tackle such a rôle to do it justice I should need much more experience."

Roles danced:

The leading role, Mazurka, etc. in	*Les Sylphides*
Taglioni and Grahn in	*Pas de Quatre*
Sugar Plum Fairy and Snow Queen in	*The Nutcracke*
Fleur de Lis in	*Esmeralda*
Ballerina in	*Etudes*
Odette in	*Swan Lake*
The Young Wife in	*The Broken Date*
Teresina in	*Napoli*
Juliet in	*Romeo and Juliet*
First Hand in	*Beau Danube*

(the last two roles in Denmark only)

Photographs

Left: In Swan Lake. *Photo: Hamilton Walter.*

Centre: A studio portrait by Vallois, Paris.

Above: In Coppelia *with Flemming Flindt.*

Text by SONIA ROBERTS

Toni Lander with Stephen Preston in *The Broken Date*

Photo: Atelier Dager

MEET THE DANCERS

STEPHEN PRESTON

STEPHEN PRESTON joined the cast of the Françoise Sagan ballet *The Broken Date* on the promise of a jazz solo, which he danced for the Monte Carlo première and for two days after the Paris opening. On the second day in Paris, however, Skouratoff, the male star of the show injured his foot during a performance and Stephen was asked by the producer to go out and finish the show, which he did without any rehearsal. There were many cries of "bravo" from the audience that night, and Stephen continued to dance the leading rôle throughout the rest of the Paris run of two weeks. On a tour which will take them from London to Holland, Switzerland, Frankfurt, and the U.S.A., playing Washington, Philadelphia and finally New York, Stephen will share the lead alternate nights with Skouratoff.

Preston started his career in the theatre at the age of fourteen, as an actor on the New York stage in a play called *Kiss and Tell*, and went with it on tour. Another play followed, this time *Ah Wilderness*, in which he had a good dramatic part as the young lead. He says he was lucky to get into a summer stock company for two summer seasons, where he had the chance to do a new play, and part, each week. They did twelve plays a season, at the Reginald Goode Theatre in the Berkshire Mountains in New York.

Then he reached an age where he was too young for some parts or too old for others, and it was at this stage he took up dancing seriously. He had always wanted to dance but his family did not approve, in fact they didn't want him to go into the theatre at all. With a little money he had saved he paid for his first dancing lessons, and within six months had his first dancing engagement, at the Roxy Theatre in New York City. "We changed our shows every three weeks here," explained Stephen "whilst we were doing one show we were getting ready for the next and in this way I gained a great deal of experience."

He stayed there for six months, and was then offered a small part in *Kiss Me Kate*. Then came a show called *Make a Wish* in which Gower Champion did the dance numbers.

At that time television was offering work to dancers at very good pay, and Stephen worked steadily on such shows as *Jackie Gleason*, *Patti Page* and *Ed Sullivan*.

He was then offered an engagement as a solo dancer at the Copa City in Florida, a very beautiful night club, and he remained there for four months. There followed an engagement with Connie Russell, a big star in America, "We went to some wonderful places," said Stephen "and did television shows, then we went to Hollywood to do a movie called *Sailing Down the River*. I liked Hollywood and was offered some work there on T.V., and in movies, so I stayed. For the past six years I have made my home there." Of course his home has the inevitable Hollywood swimming pool, "but" says Stephen "it is only a *little* swimming pool, with a *big* patio."

He remained with C.B.S. for almost two years on such shows as *Red Skelton*, *Shower of Stars*, *Ford Jubilee*, and here he was able to get small parts as an actor apart from his dancing engagements. Just before he left America to come to London with the Judy Garland show he was doing a lot of dramatic work at the studio in such shows as *Studio One*, *Kraft Theatre*, *You are There*. He also went into films again and appeared in *The Long Grey Line*, *The Kiss of Death*, and a dancing part in the film *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*.

Stephen has tremendous admiration for Judy Garland's talent on stage and screen, and he felt it was a wonderful privilege to have worked with her. This show took them on a tour of the U.S.A. which included a four months' run at the Palace Theatre in New York, Las Vegas, Washington, Dallas, Hollywood Greek Theatre, Philadelphia, and finally to the Dominion Theatre, London, where they played for five weeks.

After the show closed at the Dominion Stephen wanted to go to Paris for a holiday but just before he left London a friend contacted him offering him a part in a ballet which would be "different." It turned out to be Françoise Sagan's ballet *The Broken Date*.

Stephen did the Command Performance in London with Judy Garland and then took off for Paris to rehearse for the Sagan ballet. The part of the Young Man in this ballet combines the two things Stephen Preston most likes to do, acting and dancing, and it is one of his great ambitions that he will find himself acting once again one of these days. He studies a lot in this direction for here is a young man who always wants to be ready for whatever the fates may have in store for him. Apart from ballet, he also studied Modern Dance, Tap and Jazz "Because," says Stephen, "I feel that a dancer should have knowledge of all different types of dancing . . . also," he added with a twinkle in his eye, "it puts you in demand . . . and you are ready whenever the occasion may arise."

His hobby is outdoor sport. "All the things which are bad for dancers, such as ice skating, horse riding and ski-ing. He also studies languages and at the moment is learning Spanish. Being with the present company of *The Broken Date* gives him an excellent opportunity to brush up his French, although amongst the cast are many nationalities. There are several other Americans dancing in this ballet—Bill Lundy and Skip Martinsen, who also danced here with the Judy Garland Show. Bill does the clock dance with Edith Allard (also American). Edith has made her home in Paris for the last seven years, Bill started his career by dancing in ballet, almost fifteen years ago.

The Broken Date

Below: Friends break into the young man's room and start a wild surprise party. Photo: Serge Lido.

News of Dancers

Left: Alicia Alonso taking a bow with V. Simeonov, with whom she danced Giselle *in Leningrad during her recent appearance in Russia.*

Right: Giselle Deege, ballerina from the Berlin and Hamburg State Operas, who recently appeared on television in London (*see page* 10).

ALICIA ALONSO, first American ballerina to appear in Russia, has just returned to her home in Havana, Cuba after a two month trip which carried her to Leningrad, Riga (Latvia), Kiev and Moscow and over 17,000 miles in two months.

In Riga where she made her first appearance on December 31st, the newspaper *Soviet Culture* headlined the performance with "Giselle Thrills and Captivates Spectators". Following the ballet, members of the corps de ballet lifted Miss Alonso to their shoulders and carried the ballerina to her dressing room. A second performance of the ballet was given on January 2nd and on January 4th the ballerina appeared in the full-length *Lac de Cygnes*. Commenting on the latter, newspaper the *Voice of Riga* is quoted as saying "in the role of Odette-Odile, Miss Alonso left her audience agasp with the unforgetable impression of her sculptural poses." Leonid Zhdanov, premier danseur and brother of the Bolshoi's Yuri Zhdanov, partnered the ballerina during her Riga performances.

Describing her arrival in Leningrad on January 5th, the ballerina reported the weather almost unbearable with temperatures dropping to 33 below zero. Though hotels and theatres were well heated, the bitter cold presented her with the problem of getting warmed up enough to dance.

Giselle was Miss Alonso's first performance in Leningrad on January 7th and this time she was partnered by V. Simeonov, one of Leningrad's most prominent male dancers. Impressed by Miss Alonso's technique and what they termed 'the American pirouette', teachers from the Leningrad school invited Fernando Alonso (the ballerina's husband) to teach some classes attended by the principal dancers. Mr. Alonso also gave private classes to Dudinskaya, Leningrad ballerina.

During her short stay, Miss Alonso was able to attend several performances, among them a modern ballet by Sergehiev called *The Pass of Thunder* which astonished her by its completely modern approach.

Following a performance on the 14th with Zhdanov in *Swan Lake*, Miss Alonso left for Moscow. Reporting at the Bolshoi for an early evening rehearsal, the ballerina and her party were completely taken aback to find the theatre filled. At first she thought she had got the schedule incorrectly but was assured by her interpreter that these were students, dancers and teachers from the Moscow ballet schools who had come to study her rehearsal.

Miss Alonso's first performance at the Bolshoi was January 17th in *Giselle*, again with Simeonov as Albrecht. Following several appearances, all met with great acclaim, the Ministry of Culture invited the ballerina to do three performances of *Swan Lake* and a TV show in Kiev.

Following a brief rest in Havana, the ballerina flies to New York early in March to join and rehearse with partner Igor Youskevitch for a scheduled appearance with the Trenton, N.J. Symphony on March 5th and one with the New Orleans Symphony on the 18th. On April 5th they will appear as guest artists with the Ballet Guild in Washington, D.C. Immediately afterwards, they leave for South America and an engagement as guests with the Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires.

MUNICH — **DR. WILFRIED HOFMANN**

1,200 people waited *standing* in the Deutsches Museum Concert Hall for Stravinsky to conduct a concert of four of his works, all of which have been used as ballet scores (*Concerto in D, Apollon Musagètes, Scherzo à la Russe, Jeu de Cartes*). The concert was a triumphant affair. Stravinsky was hailed as the leading composer of this century and was shown such tremendous admiration as has been unheard of in this hall. People applauded for 18 long minutes without ceasing! This experience was repeated when Stravinsky a few weeks later conducted *Agon* and other works in the little Donaueschingen Music Festival.

The visit of Arnold Haskell was another ballet affair outside the theatre. Sponsored by the Freunde des Balletts, the German-English Society and the British Consulate General, Haskell gave an analysis of the different national styles of ballet. The lecture was translated by Prinz zu Wied. Due to lack of time Haskell entirely skipped the Danish Ballet, and—as many of us felt—elegantly avoided saying much about the American ballet which would have mattered.

The debut of a young Uruguayan dancer caused some interest. Nestor Mondino is the first dancer ever to receive a German Federal Academic Scholarship. He chose Munich. He has been a soloist with the Kniaseff, Alonso and Uruguayan National companies, and took over the part of Heino Hallhuber in Carter's *Capriccio* (while Hallhuber toured the U.S.). He showed excellent phrasing and elevation while still lacking some of the savageness which the role asks for. At the Gärtnerplatz Theater another Englishman, Michael Charnley, in the meantime succeeded in earning applause by staging the dances in Millöcker's *Gasparone*.

The season really started with the invasion of three travelling companies at a time: Within one week the ballet community had to be on the alert for Maurice Béjart, José Limon and the Greek National Ballet. The Greeks were worth while seeing if only for their wonderful display of costumes—all of them in very modest colours of incredibly numerous shades and variations. The dancing however was without highlights and much too monotonous. The same is true of the music. Folk dancing does not imply lack of stagecraft and ingenuity in presenting it! The Antonio Spanish Dance Company and others have shown how one can raise folk dances to a level pleasantly presentable and still authentic.

José Limon should have had more success in Germany than anywhere else since here Rudolf v. Laban, Harald Kreutzberg, Maria Wiegmann, Kurt Joos and Dore Hoyer have been preparing the ground—so to speak. The reaction of the audience, however, showed that also in Germany isolated Modern Dance is at a loss. One would be surprised to meet a choreographer of the classical school who still ignores the achievements of the Moderns. So one is even more surprised to see how much for obviously dogmatical reasons the Limon Company limits itself in the range of movements. There is no doubt that in all the works shown (*Ritmo Jondo, The Moor's Pavane, Satyros, Concerto Grosso, Emperor Jones*) there was great musicality in both choreography and dancers, and that the use of costumes and the construction of poses showed fine taste and skill. However, especially in *The Moor* the poses seemed rather static so that one was too aware

Around the World

Left: Russian ballerina Violet Bovt in the title role of Joan of Arc, a ballet written by Peiko and staged recently for the first time at the Stanislavski Theatre, Moscow. Her partner is Eugene Kuzmin, who takes the role of Lionel.

Right: Olga Adabache, soloist with the Marquis de Cuevas Grand Ballet, and Juan Corelli, young Spanish choreographer, rehearsing Lady Macbeth, *a long solo by Corelli, recently produced on French television.*

Photo: Marion Valentine

of the construction of the dance sequences. On the whole it seems that the female dancers were less successfully employed than the males. Almost without exception the girls were limited to tragic and pathetic expressions. These tragic women (they weren't nuns, as we all thought, but Spanish women) in *Ritmo Jondo*! showed unproblematic young clean-cut American faces. *Concerto Grosso* is a pas de trois which is built up in a way that it should necessarily lead to the points, away from terre à terre dancing. The man's variations at times just lead to a jump or to a tour just like the adagio to a pure arabesque. But no. Limon stops short and the dancers feel cut down. Only *Emperor Jones*—where only men are used—was fully appraised. Here Limon uses strictly his means and in a way adequate to his aims.

Béjart, however, was a great success. No French Company before him has shown so much good dancing, and had so much to say. It is not far from the truth when Béjart was acclaimed as the true interpreter of the existentialist philosophy—at least in *Sonate à trois* he conveys the emotions that go with reading Sartre's novel in an incredibly authentic way. Here as well as in *Symphonie* and *High Voltage* Béjart succeeds in creating tension to such a degree that the pulses go quicker and the nerves start aching. Indeed, in *High Voltage* one gets scared of touching one's neighbour. One might get an electric shock! Most of his librettos are such that if not performed perfectly they must go very wrong and cause disgust or ridicule. Béjart walks on this edge and does not tumble. Michèle Seigneuret, the girl with the St. Germain des Près—face, is going to become symbolic of Béjart's style. I was surprised, therefore, to see Tessa Beaumont in the leading role of *High Voltage*, only to be surprised again at seeing how her intense acting caught on. With those two ballerinas and Nicole Amigues, Ariel Auclerc and Tania Bari, Béjart can well show ballets which allow one to watch the feet rather than the development of the story. This he proved with *Pulcinella*. The ballet itself, however, while being pleasant dancing got too complicated through a change of the libretto into the at times bitter comedy rather than leaving it the overall funny little sketch.

What an exception to the rule: A Frenchman in ballet who knows what to say *and* how to do it well.

From the very beginning it was a crazy idea of the Opera Management to bring out Milhaud's *Salade* together with Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex*. They could have foreseen that it would be impossible to enjoy staggering tenors after the same stage had been given to dancers. Also it was unfair to the ballet to match its incompetent and messy libretto with a drama of the quality of *Oedipus*. This uneven mixture of Opera-Ballet and opera was presented to the public November 19th at the Munich Prinzregenten-Theatre (Bavarian State Opera Ballet). I was surprised to see to what a large degree Alan Carter as choreographer and Werner Schachteli (decor) have succeded in turning *Salade* into a really amusing piece of ballet without alienating it from the singing. The dancers even were told to mime as if it was they who did the singing, and this (intended or not) led to a very funny satire on opera staging on the whole. Under Alan's touch *Salade* was enriched with a whole lot of witty details and the dancing can be enjoyed quite apart from any knowledge of the confusing libretto. When Alan made his soldiers march and exercise he brought the house down. The ballet could be improved—if one could ask the singers to shut up so as to abolish a continuous cause of distraction! Among the principal dancers (Natascha Trofimowa as Isabella, Annette Chappell as Rosetta, Franz Baur—looking rather like a baker!—as Pulcinella) only Nestor Mondino, guest from Uruguay, as Cinzio was allowed a classroom step variation. A few seconds only, but what a proof of talent. *Salade* is worth while seeing if only for this boy's double cabrioles and pas de chat en tournant. He partnered Natascha Trofimowa well but the greens in their costumes were at war with each other.

On November 24th, the Munich balletomanes, organized by the Freunde des Balletts Society, for the first time came out with a ballet matinée of their own. They challenged seven Munich ballet schools to give a joint performance thus showing their special methods and talents and asking for public decision on the best of them. The Gärtnerplatz-Theater was filled as never before on a similar occasion. The prize, if there had been one, definitely would have gone to the students of the Lula von Sachnowsky School which presented one student, Angèle Albrecht, who certainly is going to make herself known beyond Germany once her talent is fully brought out.

NEDERLANDS BALLET **JANET SINCLAIR.**

Why Sonia Gaskell, the Director of the Nederlands Ballet, chose to add *The Prodigal Son* to a repertoire already overloaded with Lichine works is not very clear. When remembering the original production of this ballet in 1938, one can say that not even Baronova and Dolin could succeed in making outstanding a work full of tricks but remarkably devoid of dancing invention. At the revival in Rotterdam on 6th January, Willy de la Bye made a brave shot at the role of the Siren, and Aart Verstegen as one of the Friends of the Prodigal Son was quite outstanding, as indeed he is in everything he does.

La Rencontre was well danced by Marianna Hilarides and Verstegen, the only question being was this innately unballetic story, originally a vehicle for Caron and Babilée, really worth reviving either? However, one can fortunately find no complaint in a really delightful performance, produced by Harald Lander, of *I es Caprices de Cupidon* which closed the evening. This charming little work was danced with verve and spirit, and, being simple and unexacting, is precisely the thing in which this company would shine if only they would not forever be attempting ballets beyond their capacities.

"This is the last of the Dutch companies I've seen" Lucas Hoving was heard to remark, after the premiére of Michael Holmes' *Palisades* given by the Ballet der Lage Landen on January 28th, "and it's also the best." His reason? Though the dancers of the Ballet der Lage Landen have not, perhaps, as a whole the most finished technique to be seen in Holland today, the troupe itself is the most interesting because it can work in so many differing styles. Therefore the repertoire of the company strikes me, as it struck Mr. Hoving, as the most varied and interesting to be seen here. This does not, of course, appeal to those critics and members of the public whom Ernest

Left: Janet Sinclair's own ballet The Ball *presented by The Ballet der Lage Landen in Rotterdam on January 20th this year. Leading roles were danced by Clazina Nepveu, Lieke de Leeuw, Ben de Rochemont and Wim Bender.*
Photo: Anefo.

Newman would describe, if speaking of their parallels in the opera house, as "canary fanciers", for such people are only interested in dancers not in ballet. Technical addicts might prefer to watch the extremely well-trained female corps de ballet of the Netherlands Opera Ballet, which Mlle. Francoise Adret is busy turning into a miniature of the Paris Opera Ballet, or the clean elegant dancing of Marianna Hilarides and Jaap Flier of the Netherlands Ballet, directed by Sonia Gaskell, who is content to follow the tradition of England's Royal Ballet and accumulate as high a proportion of "revivals" as possible. But the soloist of the Ballet der Lage Landen, like the soloist of Ballet Rambert, American Ballet Theatre or the Ballets des Champs Elysees, must expect to work mainly in the contemporary repertoire; and in addition to "give the public what it wants", i.e. *The Nutcracker* or the second act of *Swan Lake*. This variety of style is what makes the company so particularly Dutch, despite the preponderance of English choreography, for the Dutch are the most rugged individualists in the world; it even took a Dutchman to perceive at first sight exactly the point which makes the work of the company so interesting.

Palisades is a ballet known to London audiences, and an interesting one. The only point on which the choreographer seems to fail is in that, using an all-male cast, he has not taken the opportunity to use exclusively male choreography. Job Leerink gave a sincere and moving performance in the role of the Prisoner originally created by Michel de Lutry and the five members of the corps de ballet of visions performed their complicated evolutions competently. Only Rob Stuijf as the Gaoler lacked the requisite weight for his role (occasionally he looked more frightened of the Prisoner than did the Prisoner of him) and I felt Johan Mittertreiner would have made a more dominating figure of this rather nebulous character.

If *Palisades* is not quite strong enough choreographically to be an unqualified success, however, it is still a matter of congratulation for the company that it can perform such a work in the same programme as *De Kennismaking* with its modern jazz idiom, as the subtleties of Denis Carey's *De Toverfles*, of Walter Gore's most delightful *Street Games* which brings down the house everywhere, and his most successful serious work, *Pavane for a Dead Beloved*, in which Mascha ter Weeme Johan Mittertreiner and Leerink give dramatic performances of the highest and most moving order. This company is now in its eleventh season, and it seems unfair that it should have to work at such a financial disadvantage when compared with the other troupes mentioned above. It seems hard, considering its totally inadequate subsidy and considering that last season the company gave over one hundred and sixty performances, to justify the thirty thousand pounds of subsidy given to the Opera Ballet, which gave eleven (apart from performances as part of the opera). It seems hard too that whatever the company does it cannot achieve honest notices from a small but powerful minority of newspaper writers. If these writers prefer the performances of the Netherlands Ballet, they are perfectly free to do so, but why should they then do everything in their power to damn another group? It is this partisan spirit which causes so much bitterness and unpleasantness in Holland and which will help to postpone any chance of amalgamation, which could result in one first-class group. Personally, I get the most pleasure from the performances of the Lage Landen, but if I attend a performance of the Netherlands Ballet and see them giving a first-rate performance of *Les Caprices de Cupidon* I am not downhearted, I am delighted, for good ballet should be a source of pleasure even to the critic. But then, I like ballet.

CHICAGO

GEORGE JACKSON

Judging by American Ballet Theatre's recent seasons, no other troupe could have been more appropriately chosen as the only representative of the United States' dancing arts at the Brussels World Fair. Its repertory had been more representative of the various trends in contemporary U.S. choreography than that of New York City Ballet which purposely pursues only a few paths or that of Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo which courageously explores the here unfashionable choreographers, accumulating many curiosities (such as Leonid Massine's *Harold in Italy* or the late Boris Romanoff's *Harlequinade*) and only occasionally a really good ballet (such as Heinz Rosen's *La Dame a la Licorne*). The male and female contingents of American Ballet Theatre's dancers were always well balanced, unlike New York City Ballet with its superb females but males who as a group were rather weak and Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo which suffered from the opposite unbalance. Unfortunately this season, on the verge of its departure for the World Fair, the American Ballet Theatre is far from being its usual self.

For five February performances at the Civic Opera House in Chicago the company concentrated on the slightest ballets in its standard repertory (such as *Interplay, Les Patineurs, Graduation Ball, Fancy Free*, various pas de deux) and some of the very poorest new ones (*Paean, Offenbach in the Underworld, Winter's Eve*). Even with dancers in top form it would be impossible to make such ballets as interesting as the psychological ballets of Tudor, Robbins and de Mille—and the company was certainly not in top condition.

The American Ballet Theatre's star is Nora Kaye. Her strong but essentially unlovely quality of movement had been used to advantage in the psychological ballets. With these out of the repertory she dances, to her and their disadvantage, the standard classical pas de deux and a new one especially choreographed for her and Erik Bruhn by Alexandra Fedorova Fokine to music from Pugni's *Paquita*. This pas and Herbert Ross' *Paean* were the only works entirely new to Chicago.

Danced to the *Concerto in D for Violin, Piano and Quartet* by the late 19th Century French composer Ernest Chausson, the sections of *Paean* are inspired by lines of Sappho. The first movement, Invocation, by "Goddess of Cyprus come"; the second, Dedication, by "poised like a golden flower in air"; the third, Visitation, by "Thy form is lovely and thine eyes are honeyed . . . Rise . . . before thee Aphrodite stands" and the fourth movement, Celebration, by "happy bridegroom. Now has dawned that day . . . When in thine arms thou'lt hold . . . the maiden of thy dream". Each section of the ballet opens and closes with a tableaux simulating the figures drawn on Green vases. The dancing which develops from and into these poses is in a plastic style which might suggest that Ross is a follower of Leonid Massine. But he has more than copied Massine's symphonic ballets; he has intensified the choreography for the soloists, thus enabling him to use a smaller orchestra of dancers than did Massine and permitting him to pattern the ballet more strictly after the score. Despite the unacademic quality of the dancing, the form of the ballet is as musically clear as that of Balanchine's symphonic ballets. In learning from both Massine and Balanchine, Herbert Ross resembles Frederick Ashton. Unfortunately, like Ashton he often squanders his craftsmanship on trite effects and the overall impression of *Paean* was trite. Its beautiful moments during soli or pas de deux were destroyed by banal choreography for the corps de ballet twisting a huge green piece of chiffon. The ballet was hideously costumed by an uncredited designer.

The dancing of the company as a whole was not at top level; even among the soloists there were many uneven performances. The male contingent, besides Erik Bruhn, is headed by John Kriza, Scott Douglas, Michael Lland and Royes Fernandez. Of the female soloists, three are new to the company: the French dancer, Violette Verdy whose full bodied style saved an otherwise lean *Les Sylphides;* the former New York City Ballet dancer, Jillana Williams, a strong technician but somewhat perfunctory stylist; and the Brazilian dancer Ady Addor who seemed best in soubrette roles but whose nervous, edgy style is at odds with the somewhat slick smoothness of the average American Ballet Theatre dancer. As yet, none of the three are completely at home in the repertory and their full contributions to the company will be made in future seasons. The dancing burden of this season fell on the superb Lupe Serrano and the adequate Ruth Ann Koesun. Among the second soloists, the young Elisabeth Carroll was exceptional. French by birth and trained at the Monte Carlo Opera by Marika Besobrasova, she is one of the cleanest classical dancers seen with this or any company.

Continued at foot of next column

Summer Dance Festivals

GERMANY

If you think of combining a holiday abroad this year with one of the numerous Music and Dancing Festivals there are many dates from which you can choose. From May 15th to June 8th a festival of music, opera, drama and ballet will take place in Wiesbaden in Germany, and the following companies will participate. The State Opera Company of Rome, The State Opera of Belgrade, American Ballet Theatre, Argentine Opera of Buenos Aires, Schauspielhaus Hamburg and the State Theatre Wiesbaden. Advance bookings can be made through "Das Hessische Staatstheater, Wiesbaden."

SPAIN

If you prefer a holiday in Spain, then you will find Festivals of Music and Dancing at Granada from 4th to 14th June, Santander 25th July to 31st August, the Basque Week at Bilbao from 13th to 20th August, and Seville from 20th September to 6th October. There will also be a folk-dancing festival during August in San Sebastian. The Spanish Tourist Office in London issue a pamphlet giving the dates of the principal events.

BELGIUM

There is to be a Universal and International Exhibition held in Brussels this year which will open from April to October. Many countries are taking part. Apart from the sections devoted to Art and Science there is an Amusement Park and 40 acres of beautifully laid out gardens. The architecture of the Exhibition itself, with its highlight—the *Atomium*, a gleaming metal construction nearly as tall as St. Pauls, towering in the middle of a dazzling array of pavilions, is said to be twenty years ahead of its time. On the 26th May our British Royal Ballet will have its première in the Grand Auditorium, and afterwards will give performances at the Théâtre de la Monnaie from 28th May to 1st June. They will be followed by the Bolshoi Ballet which opens at the Grand Auditorium on 21st June, and will give subsequent performances at the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie. Another dance Company visiting Brussels will be the Ballet Antonio, with the National Orchestra of Madrid, from the 29th to the 30th July at the Palais des Beaux-Arts. Their repertoire will include the *Three Cornered Hat* and *La Vita Breve*, and among the ballerinas dancing will be Rosita Segovia and Carmen Rojas. Travel enquiries should be made to the Belgian Tourist Office, 167, Regent Street, London, W.1.

The Bregenz Festival.

AUSTRIA

If Austria is your destination then you would do well to visit Bregenz which is situated on the lake of Constance, directly at the foot of the Pfander mountain, with a romantic old town, formerly called Brigantium. Here from July 18th to August 17th there is a Festival and the Vienna State Opera Ballet will be one of the attractions. One of the ballets they will give is *Sylvia*, which will take place on the lake itself. With its thousands of lights, the colour and the music, this is a very beautiful event. Ballet performances will take place on 27th, 30th, 31st July and 3rd August during which time the new ballet *Hotel Sacher* produced by the Company in Vienna last year can also be seen.

SWEDEN

The Swedish Festival, which takes place during the first two weeks of June, will be held in Stockholm. There will be symphony concerts, opera and ballet. The Swedish Royal Opera Ballet will give three evening performances.

DENMARK

Amongst the ballets scheduled for presentation at the Festival which takes place in Copenhagen from the 17th to 31st May, will be *Vision* after a story by H. C. Andersen—once a member of the company—with music by Benjamin Britten, and a new ballet by Schaufuss to music by Richard Strauss entitled *Opus* 13.

Later in the year, from July 1st to August 10th there will be a programme consisting of baroque opera and ballet which will take place in the courtyard of the Royal Academy Charlottenborg, Copenhagen. From July 26th to August 24th there will also be a Summer Exhibition of Danish Contemporary Art.

ITALY

Each year since 1955 a festival has been held at Nervi, and in the beautiful open-air theatre performances have been given by some of the greatest dancers of our day. An addition last year was a Festival of films, and this will take place again this year with ten nations represented, amongst them Russia with three films. At the Festival Mondiale del Bambino in the second half of June in Palermo there will be a ballet specially devised for children (or performed by junior dancers) and in Lucca (Tuscany) there will be classical ballet.

This article is only intended to be a rough guide to some of the Festivals including dancing throughout the summer in Europe. In addition to these performances of course many cities hold their usual ballet performances in the main theatres. There are many more Festivals than we have space to list, and our American readers will know about Ted Shawn's wonderful Dance Festival held each year at Jacob's Pillow, an event which attracts a galaxy of ballet stars for the season.

Coming nearer home of course there are many events in Britain itself, including the Edinburgh Festival and Butlin's Juvenile Dancing Festival and Congress held at their Filey Holiday Camp in Yorkshire. The Box Office for Edinburgh opens on April 7th, and enquiries should be made direct to Edinburgh Festival Society, Synod Hall, Castle Terrace, Edinburgh. Butlin's issue an attractive 32 page of syllabus their Juvenile and Adult Festivals, and you can obtain a copy by writing to the Festival Office, 36, Trippet Lane, Sheffield, 1.

All you have to do now is to book your seats and have a good time. Happy holiday.

E.H.

NEWS FROM THE WORLD . . . . . *Continued*

PARIS **FERDINAND REYNA**

To honour the memory of the musician Maurice Ravel, who died 20 years ago in 1937, the Paris Opéra presented on January 24th a new choreographic version of *Valse* by Ravel. The work was entrusted this time to Harald Lander and the decors and costumes were by J. D. Maillart. The principal dancers were Mlle. Claire Motte as the young girl and the male star Alexandre Kalioujny supported by the corps de ballet. The theme by Mr. Lander, namely a young girl thinks she is a prey to a dream and believes she meets a prince charming, is not very original and is worthy of something better. But what is worse is that the choreography is cold and monotonous and Mr. Kalioujny plays his part with too much passion almost amounting to violence.

Le Théâtre des Nations which is playing at the former Théâtre Sarah Bernardt, will once again this year be the meeting place for the theatres of the world. The following ballet companies and ballets will be presented:—in April, London's Festival Ballet with Anton Dolin, then the Staedische Oper from Berlin, with *Le Sacre du Printemps* to new choreography by Mary Wigman, and *Marathon de la Danse* (music by Henze and production by Lucchino Visconti). The participation of the U.S.A. is also expected with the American Ballet Theatre and its stars, Nora Kaye, John Kriza, Erik Bruhn and Lupe Serrano.

A great musical and choreographic spectacle will be organised on the 9th May in the precincts of the Brussels Exhibition by the Haute Autorité Charbon-Acier under the artistic direction of Jean Robin, at the present time artistic director of the Théâtre des Champs Elysées. The theme is *Le Printemps de l'Europe* (the Springtime of Europe), to be developed by the greatest artists of the six countries belonging to the community. After the opening part in which a large symphony orchestra from the north will be heard and a chamber opera from Italy, a new ballet by Janine Charrat will be seen (music by Georges Auric, decors and costumes by Leonor Fini). Six stars from six different countries will dance accompanied by the Luxembourg orchestra.

The Grand Ballet du Marquis de Cuevas will be in Paris at the Théâtre des Champs Elysées from March 21st to April 20th. The company which is once again directed by John Taras, is at the present moment in Cannes. The Marquis is said to be planning to abandon the modern repertoire and to devote his ballet exclusively to classical works.

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New Recordings

Reviewed by BEDFORD CROWLE

JARDIN AUX LILAS

What a loss Ginette Neveu is and how this record, HMV. ALP1520, brings it home to one! Ravel's *Tzigane* and Debussy's third violin sonata are accompanied by her brother Jean, but it is her wonderful performance of Chausson's *Poème* with Dobrowen conducting the Philharmonia Orchestra that concerns us. It has a sense of style, of atmosphere that leave other interpretations away behind. The recording can be criticized slightly but it is the superb playing, not the hi-fi, that matters here.

PASSIONS

The Nouveau Ballet de Monte Carlo with that superlative dancer, Chauviré, gave us the opportunity of seeing Lifar's ballet which he had grafted to the first movement of Cesar Franck's evergreen symphony. Munch with the Boston S.O., RCA. RB16036, has the ability to see the symphony as a whole, thus making the most of its long line. In fact I strongly recommend it if the occasional coarseness of American brass recording does not worry you.

CONCERTO AUX ETOILES

This is Lander's ballet for the Paris Opera, set to Bartok's well-known *Concerto for Orchestra*, which Milloss had already used for his ballet, *Soglia del Tempo*, for the Rome Opera Ballet. The work is considered a good introduction to this composer and Fritz Reiner conducting the Chicago S.O. makes an excellent job of it on HMV. ALP1494, which should encourage those hesitating on the brink.

GAITE PARISIENNE and LES PATINEURS

These two delicious ballets are both by great choreographers of our time, Massine and Ashton. The light-hearted music of Offenbach used in Massine's ballet is given in full, whereas it is the usual suite from *Les Patineurs*. Fiedler and the Boston Pops, RCA. RD27020, get a good, clear recording which apparently is all his enormous following expect, as his imaginative powers seem to be non-existent. However this lovable music carries itself along in spite of everything.

ROMEO AND JULIET

To find that Delius has in this ballet superseded the inevitable Tchaikovsky Overture is really interesting. Besides other works, Tudor also wove in the *Irmelin Prelude* and the *Walk to the Paradise Garden*, both included on Pye CCL30108. With them is the only LP recording of the little heard *Fennimore Intermezzo* and *Idyll*, the latter sung fairly well by Sylvia Fisher and Jess Walters. However we must be grateful for the opportunity to study these works even if Barbirolli, conducting the Hallé, is no Beecham.

BEECHAM'S LOLLIPOPS

Only Beecham would dare to call *L'Après-midi* a lollipop and get away with it! HMV. ALP1533 has many delights, due to the magic of his touch in, say, Berlioz' *Dance of the Sylphs* or Sibelius' *Valse Triste*. Nevertheless, as the Faune passes by, I must remark that it has not the atmosphere of his old 78—of that hot sultry afternoon with the air visibly shimmering. Of course the performance is good but I am using Beecham as his own yardstick.

APPARITIONS

For me, the name of Liszt immediately conjures up his *Valse Oubliée* in *Apparitions* as well as his *Mephisto Waltz* in the Festival Ballet's *Vision of Marguerite*. Both are in a recital of his works, HMV. ALP1534, by the Hungarian pianist, György Cziffra, who has been creating quite a sensation. This record provides the justification except for the hard tone of the *Mephisto Waltz*. The brilliant rendering of *Les Jeux d'Eaux à la Villa d'Este* and other items is quite remarkable.

THE RED POPPY

This is the first LP suite from Glière's ballet and Fistoulari with the LPO, RCA. RB16049, give a very good account of it. Its popularity in Russia is probably more from the political rather than the musical slant, which is not strong. The performance, however, will not disappoint you nor will that of the coupling, *Caucasian Sketches*. Recording first class.

COPPELIA AND SYLVIA

To make yet another suite from each of these ballets worthwhile, existing recordings must be surpassed. Cluytens and the Paris Opera Orchestra on Columbia 33CX1505 do not achieve this—they are, in fact, pedestrian. The transfer of Irving's excellent LPs onto EPs will be most acceptable particularly by those who have to build their libraries more slowly. The first two are HMV. 7EP7048 and 7EP7046, *Coppélia* and *Sylvia* respectively. A complete *Sylvia* from one of the companies would be very welcome.

I must apologise—the Wagner record last month should read, HMV. ALP1513.

Ballet Guide

THE ROYAL BALLET AT COVENT GARDEN

19th Mar.	Wed.	(eve)	*Scenes de Ballet, The Rake's Progress, Petrushka* (Guest Artist: Helpmann)
20th ,,	Thurs.	(eve)	*Le Lac des Cygnes* (Nerina, Blair, Lane, Page, Shaw, B. Taylor, Grahame)
21st ,,	Fri.	(eve)	*Scenes de Ballet, Miracle in the Gorbals* (Revival 1st performance), *Les Patineurs* (Guest Artist: Helpmann)
22nd ,,	Sat.	(mat)	*Le Lac des Cygnes* (Fonteyn, Somes, Park, Grahame, Trecu, Boulton)
22nd ,,	Sat.	(eve)	*Les Patineurs, Miracle in the Gorbals, Coppelia, Act III* (Guest Artist: Helpmann)
24th ,,	Mon.	(eve)	*Solitaire, Miracle in the Gorbals, Daphnis & Chloe* (Guest Artist: Helpmann)
25th ,,	Tues.	(eve)	*Le Lac des Cygnes* (Beriosova, Chatfield, Wells, Mercier, Clegg, Boulton, Dixon)
26th ,,	Wed.	(eve)	*Solitaire, Coppelia*
27th ,,	Thurs.	(eve)	*Benevolent Fund Gala Performance (8 p.m.)*
28th ,,	Fri.	(eve)	*Les Patineurs, Hamlet, The Firebird* (Guest Artist: Helpmann)
29th ,,	Sat.	(mat)	*Le Lac des Cygnes* (Nerina, Blair, Wells, Mercier, Clegg, Boulton, Dixon)
29th ,,	Sat.	(eve)	*Le Lac des Cygnes* (Jackson, Chatfield, Lane, Page, Shaw, B. Taylor, Grahame)
31st ,,	Mon.	(eve)	*Les Sylphides, Rake's Progress, Lady and the Fool*
1st Apr.	Tues.	(eve)	*Les Patineurs, Coppelia*
5th ,,	Sat.	(mat)	*Lady and the Fool, Hamlet, Coppelia Act III*
9th ,,	Wed.	(eve)	*Les Sylphides, Hamlet, Ballet Imperial*
12th ,,	Sat.	(mat)	*Swan Lake* (Fonteyn, Somes)
12th ,,	Sat.	(eve)	*Swan Lake* (Beriosova, Chatfield)
16th ,,	Wed.	(eve)	*The Shadow, Giselle*
17th ,,	Thurs.	(eve)	*The Shadow, Giselle*
19th ,,	Sat.	(mat)	*Les Patineurs, Hamlet, Ballet Imperial*
19th ,,	Sat.	(eve)	*Les Patineurs, Miracle in the Gorbals Ballet Imperial*
21st ,,	Mon.	(eve)	*Les Sylphides, The Firebird, Petrushka*
23rd ,,	Wed.	(eve)	*Solitaire, The Lady and the Fool, The Firebird*
26th ,,	Sat.	(mat)	*Solitaire, Giselle*
26th ,,	Sat.	(eve)	*Solitaire, Giselle*
28th ,,	Mon.	(eve)	*Ballet Imperial, The Lady and the Fool, Petrushka*

THE ROYAL BALLET ON TOUR
(formerly Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet)

W/c	24th Mar.	*New Theatre, Cardiff*
,,	7th Apr.	*Theatre Royal, Nottingham*
,,	14th ,,	*Coventry Theatre, Coventry*
,,	21st ,,	*Royal Court Theatre, Liverpool*
,,	28th ,,	*Olympia Theatre, Dublin*

FESTIVAL BALLET FOREIGN TOUR

17th–27th April	*Theatre Sarah Bernhardt, Paris. (Paris Festival)*
29th April–5th May	*Theatre de l'Opera, Nice*
9th–21st May	*Teatro Nacionale de San Carlos, Lisbon*
24th–27th May	*Teatro de l'Opera, Marseille*
2nd–14th June	*Israel (celebration of the 10th anniversary of the State of Israel)*
17th–22nd June	*The Staatstheater, Zurich (Zurich Festival)*
24th–29th June	*Deutschestheater, Munich (800th Anniversary of the City of Munich)*
7th–8th July	*Theatre Nacionale de l'Opera, Paris (two perfs.* Nutcracker *in its entirety)*
11th–13th July	*Nervi International Dance Festival at Genoa*
16th July–13th Sept.	*Festival Hall, London*

BALLET RAMBERT ON TOUR

W/c	31st Mar.	*New Theatre, Hull*
,,	7th Apr.	*White Rock Pavilion, Hastings*

Part Two ROYAL BALLET STUDENT *by David Benn*

THE train rattling along towards London is not nearly fast enough. Your imagination leaps ahead, you indulge in your favourite daydream. It is a "first night" at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, there is tumultous applause from the audience and a ballerina steps forward to take a curtain call, a mass of bouquets at her feet. As the curtain falls Frederick Ashton assures the ballerina he will create a ballet especially for her.

The train shudders to a halt, you emerge from the carriage small, unnoticed and alone, and for a moment you long for the safety of home, the familiar routine of school and the friendly atmosphere of your own ballet class.

But this is no time for day-dreaming, the first thing you must do is to find somewhere to sleep. You have received a list of addresses from the school and you try these first. The truth begins to dawn upon you, you are one of many newcomers to London, your idea of a moderate rent is not in keeping with what you are asked for the privilege of renting a very modest room with a quantity of chipped china and a rusty gas-stove. Your hope of finding somewhere central vanishes and you go further and further into the suburbs in an effort to live on your grant.

When you find your first room you forget for a while that it is cold and impersonal. For the first time you are free to do as you like. Later you realise that there is no joy in staying up late because you are dead tired and want to go to bed, and you can't relax in bed and enjoy your freedom in the morning because it is more than your life is worth not to be ready for class on the stroke of nine. You wind your alarm and remember that you have to get your own breakfast in the morning.

It is no time before the alarm rings out, and it seems as if you are getting up in the middle of the night. But as you get a little warmer, and the daylight grows, you are suddenly filled with excitement. Your pulse quickens, this is *the* day. You pack your new shoes, new tunic and new tights into a small case, and set off for the nearest tube station. The buffeting you receive in the rush-hour crowd, and the discomfort of standing all the way do not dampen your ardour, but your confidence begins to ebb as you approach number forty-five Colet Gardens, to you it looks terribly forbidding.

"Well, well" a voice greets you, "I knew you'd get in, you looked so *confident*." You turn to find one of the many girls you had previously seen at your audition, and you both laugh. Giving each other moral support you enter.

You are given a number and called by your surname. You join a group of students in practice costume filing into a classroom, and you begin to sigh with relief because here at last you feel you will hold your own.

Your first look at the floor tells you you are in for a stiff time. The movements at the barre seem to follow one on another with such rapidity that your head goes round. You are quite pleased when you are called into the centre, at home you were generally at the front of your class, but now you are lost in anonymity. Crowded on all sides you are sure you haven't room for an arabesque, but jetés follow arabesques in quick succession, and the knots in the floorboards seem to gleam like malicious eyes.

Long successions of enchaînements leave you doubting your intelligence, they seem twice as long as those you did at home. You are now glad you are one of a crowd, but this is not to last, pirouettes begin. How many people, you wonder, have started by doing thirty-two fouettés across this floor and ending by doing them across a stage set for *Swan Lake?*

Your turn comes. You try to turn your head, but you dare not look away from those uneven floorboards. One minute you are spinning and then it happens, the floor comes up and hits you. You wish you could creep away and hide, but you are surrounded by laughing faces, and the knots which brought you down continue to gleam at you from the floorboards. You have never tackled anything like this class before!

A week passes, and the world of the Royal Ballet School has become more familiar, though still full of surprises. One day you will be able to look back and laugh at your first mistakes, but at present you can only think of the hard work. The classes are harder than anything you ever did before and you are introduced to classical mime and plastique, which are entirely new to you. Only in your ballet club at home did you have an opportunity to do pas de deux, and it is very interesting to work with a partner, but now you begin to learn that each partner has his own differences, perhaps only minute, but they can make or mar a performance. The older students tell you that in a few months you will be learning the pas de deux from actual ballets, but at the moment there is nothing but solid grind in learning the rudiments.

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Young Dancers

Right: Pupils of the British School of Dancing, taken during a performance at the Theatre Segura, Lima, Peru.

Photo: Foto Gaston.

In this feature last October we concluded a report on a ballet group in Malta with the words "the entire Group is now training hard for that great day when the first and last items on the programme read . . . "*Lina Perry's Ballet Group Presents . . .*" Mr. and Mrs. Perry who train the dancers wrote to tell me that this write-up gave a fillip to the Group, and proved to be a great incentive, "the result" they said "thanks largely to *Ballet Today*, has been the production of a first full length ballet performance".

Our *Young Dancers* feature was started to encourage all the young people who work so hard and receive very rare recognition of their progress. In spotlighting their work occasionally, especially overseas, they think *somebody* outside their own group is interested in what they are doing.

These young people may well be the dancers of tomorrow, we must not forget them in the spate of news of to-day.

We are pleased to print a report of the Malta group's first production below.

LINA PERRY'S GROUP DEBUT

It's happened at last! Lina Perry's Ballet Group has put over its first full-scale performance of classical and modern ballet, national dances and tap numbers, for the ballet-going public. The performance took place at the Knightshall, Valletta, for Members and guests of the Malta Cultural Institute.

A packed house watched the Group perform a two-hour programme of varied items, opening with a *barre* and centre demonstration by representatives of the Babies, Intermediates and Advanced classes, with solo *enchaînements*.

This item was conducted strictly along Royal Academy of Dancing syllabus lines, with a spoken commentary by Roland Flamini. Miss Josephine Mellillo accompanied the classes at the piano, playing R.A.D. syllabus music. For the other items a string quartet joined in with the pianist.

Second on the night's programme was *And So To Bed*, in which Babies and Intermediates combined in an ensemble with solos. The house commented very favourably on pointe-precision and arm usage by the Intermediate soloistes.

Divertissement provided an opportunity for the Group's principal and guest artist James Foyle (who danced with the Sadler's Wells Ballet before it assumed its present title of the Royal Ballet) to show the audience a technically mature pas de deux in romantic style.

The Advanced class representatives took the stage—a very deep stage incidentally, with decor and lighting by Maltese Louis Frendo, who has been connected with the stage and its technical requirements since the age of five—with the Valse from *Sylvia*, featuring Marie-Therese Scerri Montaldo and Josephine Sammut Pullicino.

Miss Scerri Montaldo showed great promise in spite of a little angular arm trouble, while Miss Sammut Pullicino preferred a gentler attack than her partner in her portrayal.

Pizzicato with Lina Perry and Advanced student Victoria Ghirlando showed to great advantage staccato *pointes* and shadowlike precision.

James Foyle presented a tongue-in-cheek item of modern dance showing English and American interpretations of modern ballet, after which Lina Perry danced a barefoot *Ritual Fire Dance*, demonstrating both modern and acrobatic ballet.

Josephine Sammut Pullicino and Marie-Therese Scerri Montaldo took the stage with *Tarantella Napolitana*, followed by a Russian Peasant Dance portrayed with energy by Victoria Ghirlando and Francis Calleja. Lina Perry and James Foyle ended the first half of the programme with a modern balletic interpretation of *Flamenco Love*.

The second part opened with an ambitious classical item entitled *Barre et Ballerina*. The original idea was by Jean Sylvestre and included the use of a 'magic' mirror. This item told the choreographic story of how hard work and inspiration can transfer students of the Ballet to the pinnacle of success. Appearing in this item were Josephine Sammut Pullicino, Marie-Therese Scerri Montaldo, Victoria Ghirlando and Francis Calleja.

The *pas de deux* was especially noteworthy, with Miss Ghirlando displaying a technically fast attack balanced by the sympathetic role of Master Calleja as danseur; although this young man has a lot to learn he displayed a working knowledge of what duties constitute the danseuse's "third leg."

A tap divertissement came next, featuring Tanya Perry and Jane Stubbs in a cheerful *Tap Hornpipe;* then followed *Rhythm on Taps* with Lina Perry and James Foyle as the exponents. James Foyle then took over in a fast-moving tap item to *Minnie-Ha-Ha* which took the audience by storm.

The performance ended with *Ballet Variations*, performed by the three classes' representatives, with the Group's principal as soloiste.

The Group is taught on R.A.D. lines, Lina Perry (believed to be the first Maltese ballet teacher to undergo a R.A.D. Teacher's course at that organisation's London headquarters) is the mother of five children —two of whom dance in the Group and a third getting in the way of most home rehearsals. Lina Perry had previously undertaken a current Teacher's course in Grade work under Miss Peggy Whiteley, a travelling R.A.D. examiner.

And so, the Group has had, "The first sweet smell of success," in a minor but important way. It is hoped that the Group will stage a repeat performance for the Maltese ballet-going public, now on the increase.

From:- **THE BRITISH SCHOOL OF DANCING**
Lima, Peru

Dear Madam,

I have been reading your magazine ever since it was first published and many of my pupils now look forward to your publication every month. I have noticed that you are always interested in teachers with schools abroad and see that so far you have not spoken of any in South America.

About twelve nationalities are represented amongst the 150 pupils attending my school. Recently we produced a group of Petits Ballets and one of Lima's biggest theatres was sold out. The proceeds were donated to a local charity.

The school was started about five years ago and has had many difficulties to overcome. Accommodation is very difficult and halls are practically non-existent. Also only these last few years have the general public become more ballet minded. Many of the pupils are in Peru only for short periods. The Peruvians themselves have good rhythm but lack many of the physical aspects of a good ballerina.

I do hope you will be able to publish a little piece about the school, it would give a lot of encouragement to the girls and make me feel a little less cut off from England. I myself have been a pupil of Espinoza and Ruth French and also studied for two years in Czechoslovakia under an ex-dancer from the Bolshoi Theatre.

Sincerely,

ROSINA MULLER.

Published and Edited by Estelle Herf from 15, *Upper Brighton Road, Surbiton, Surrey (Telephone: Elmbridge* 9743), *to whom all Editorial advertising and other communications should be addressed.*

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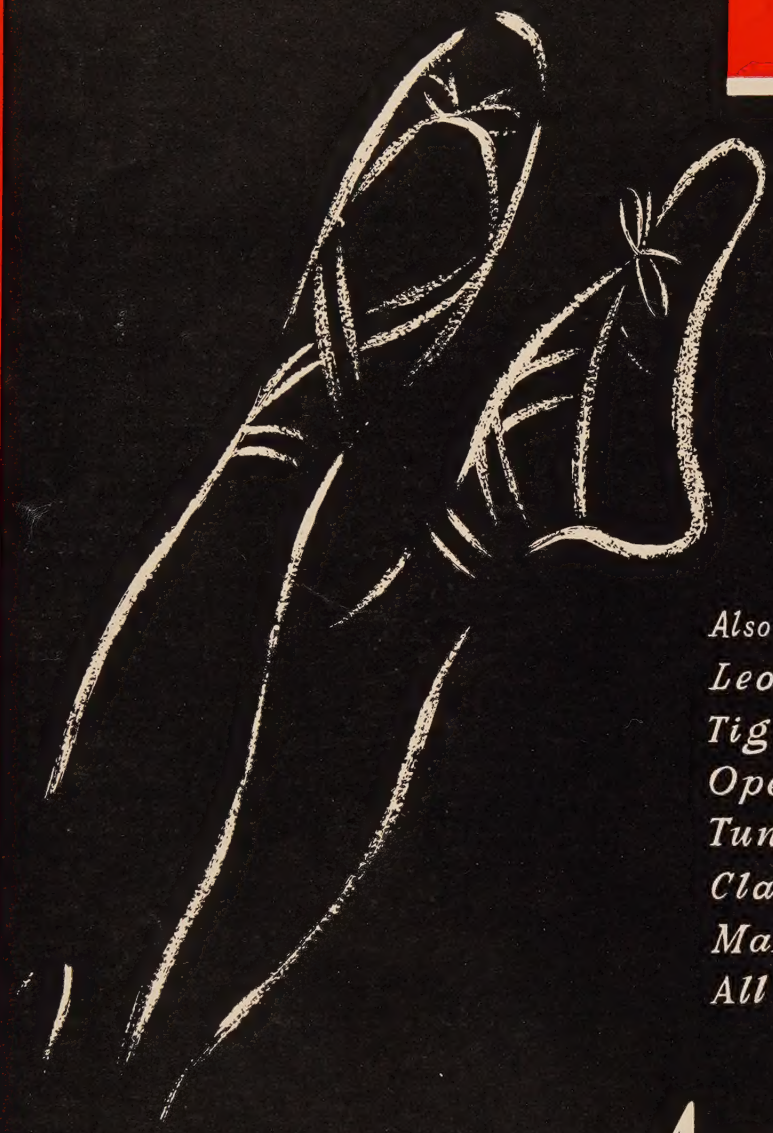

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